

THE

AUG 12 1932

# CORNHILL MAGAZINE

AUGUST  
1932

EDITED BY  
LEONARD HUXLEY



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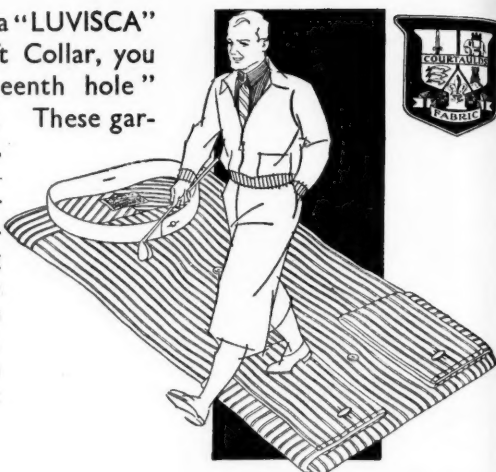
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## THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE for SEPTEMBER

The September issue will contain several contributions dealing with the Scott Centenary:

*Friends of Sir Walter: Unpublished Letters*, by W. Forbes Gray.

*The Making of the Minstrelsy. Scott and Shortreed in Liddesdale*, by W. E. Wilson.

*Sophia and Anne: The Daughters of Sir Walter Scott*, by Margaret H. Watt.

*John Gibson Lockhart*, by M. Clive Hildyard, Ph.D.

And among other contributions:—

*Science in Denmark*, by J. G. Crowther.

*More Bureaucracy*, by Frank Elliott.

# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1932.

## A PIONEER SHOP-GIRL.

BY MARY JONES.

Forty years ago to enter a shop was social suicide : as unthinkable as flying, or motor-buses, or wireless. No gently nurtured girl passing in those days beyond the great gulf fixed between idleness and trade could hope to return whence she came. Thus said my family and much more beside when, full of righteous self-immolation, I announced I was about to commit this unpardonable sin.

Born in a sentimental age (when to be the youngest *and* delicate meant every form of parental indulgence from getting the pick of anything going to never doing lessons if my head ached—and I took care it ached often), I came to adolescence a rare dunce. So that, when the crash came, I faced a cold and unfriendly world with nothing to recommend me to its bosom. Naturally, having learnt practically nothing, the path of teaching was closed. No one, very properly, wanted me for a companion. The nursing profession, when I presented myself at St. George's Hospital as a candidate, laughed in my face. Lastly, my own sisters, with more truth than kindness, turned on me with the remark : ' If anyone was silly enough to engage you, they wouldn't keep you five minutes : you'd have one of your headaches—and out you'd go ! '

Fortunately I was possessed with one left-handed virtue—rarely credited as such—obstinacy. Sisterly criticism stimulated this into wholesome activity ; and, hot and indignant, I vowed, then and there, they should live to eat their words, and that right quickly.

Sooner said than done, however.

Out of the countless answers to advertisements for companions, amanuenses, even travelling maids, I received never a single reply. Drawing blanks as the days went by grew painfully monotonous. Clearly I must widen my field or own myself beaten. My determination, however, not only remained unshaken but hardened under constant disappointment. And as though to reward it, my eye one day fell on two lines in the Personal Column of the *Daily Telegraph* from Messrs. Jay, of Regent Street. The word

'mannequin' was not then, I think, in use this side the Channel. The advertisement merely stated there was a vacancy in the model department for a young lady, whose application must be made in person.

Without a moment's hesitation I put on my hat, caught a train, and about noon walked into Jay's shop; nothing doubting but that, if I were willing to strut up and down in model gowns, Messrs. Jay would be only too thankful to engage me. In my mind, at least, the thing was as good as settled.

Yet, somehow, once inside the building, face to face with a smart young shopwalker, I felt a sickening weakness about my knees. So I sat down rather hurriedly on the first chair within reach, which happened to be in the glove department, and, in answer to the usual enquiry as to my pleasure, said I wished to see Mr. Jay. I think at that moment I hoped he was not there, and that I might get out again without having committed myself. But he *was* there; for presently a tall, nice-looking man in a racing-coat with field-glasses slung across his chest stood in front of me, faintly surprised and smiling. I could not—no I could *not* say what I had come about before an audience of two glove attendants and an obsequious shopwalker who, with ears cocked, obviously were burning to be enlightened as to my business.

Desperately, and in a very small voice, I asked if I might speak to him privately, and with great courtesy he at once led me to his office. I shall never forget his kindness. Here was a man who, doubtless, left all such matters as I had come about to be dealt with by the head of the particular department concerned, and who obviously was about to leave the premises on pleasure bent. Yet he listened sympathetically and without hurry to my story of broken family fortunes; hid a smile when I showed him the newspaper cutting and at the same time asked that the vacancy might be mine; and patiently and at some length explained my unfitness.

'You don't know what you are asking,' he said. 'It is not an easy life—at least for anyone like you! You would live in, all found. But for the first six months there would be no salary and no holidays beyond Bank Holidays. Afterwards, if you proved yourself efficient, as,' bowing courteously, 'I am sure you would, you would begin at a salary of £25 a year and two days' holiday in the summer.' Then, seeing that I was still unconvinced, he measured me with his eye and shook his head. I was

under stock size. I assured him I could correct this with higher heels. Again he shook his head; but, to end the argument, led the way to a fitting-room and, sending for a ball-gown, invited me to try it on. Alas! as I struggled out to where he was waiting in the showroom, fold upon fold of gauzy material writhed round my feet nearly throwing me to the ground. No heels, however high, could surmount this difficulty. Even I had to admit as much. Defeat was complete.

I remember the tears that smarted in my eyes, and the warm handshake with which we parted. But I cannot recall anything more until I found myself outside, saying bitterly under my breath: 'I won't go home! I won't! I won't! Until I can tell them I've got a job!'

The life of Oxford Circus gyrated round me, cruelly unconscious of my distress. How could I, an untrained, ignorant, penniless girl, pierce this vast indifference? I looked east, and a thought came to me out of the darkness.

Midway between where I stood and the city was another large establishment, which for two generations had supplied our family with the needful in clothes and furniture. Its head, the owner of a deer forest and a four-in-hand, was known to my father in the field of sport. I would go and bombard him!

It was a longish walk to Tottenham Court Road and my old enemy, headache, the result of a neglected luncheon hour, took its toll. But the assurance born of despair inspired me with the necessary aplomb for impressing the shopwalker who at once ushered me into a private room. And here, with very little delay, I was joined by an elderly man whom I guessed could be no other than Mr. Sweetbread himself. Imagine then my surprise when, with only half a glance in my direction and a puzzled frown, he turned abruptly about and made for the door. Was I so small that he had not seen me? Was there something unseemly in my appearance? . . . He was nearly through the aperture when, with an effort, I woke up to the situation. 'Mr. Sweetbread,' I cried, 'it was I who wanted to see you. My name is Jones. I think you once knew some of my people. They lived at ——'

He sprang round and coming back to where I had risen, said awkwardly: 'But you—I was expecting to see a middle-aged lady—your aunt, I suppose, or, or . . .'

His embarrassment so greatly exceeded my own that in sympathy for him I forgot to be sorry for myself. Pacing up and down

the length of the room with eyes bent upon the floor, he listened to my short narrative. Then murmuring something about consulting his manager as to what could be done, he disappeared ; and once more I was alone.

I waited so long while the shadows of a short winter afternoon crept out of the corners and enveloped the dull office furniture, that I began to fear I was forgotten. Or, what would have hurt much more, that escape at any price from an importunate young woman had been Mr. Sweetbread's trump card. Despondency had all but strangled hope when I perceived a short, thick-set, elderly man, with grey hair cut *en brosse*, was standing in the doorway, panting heavily through a mouth which, by reason of its enormous tongue, seemed unable to close. When at length he could speak, it was in soliloquy more than to me.

'Dear me, dear me ! And so you are little Miss Jones. Why, I've served your Grandpa many times and your Grandma too. She'd give a guinea a yard, not a penny less, for a silk dress, and think nothing of it ! They always bought of the best ! Maybe I've seen your Pa too. I went down once to — about some Haxminster carpets. I remember the grape'ouses and all—a fine place ! Well, well !' Then with a shake of his large head he switched off sentiment and, putting on his spectacles, passed rapidly to business.

Did I know what I was undertaking ? Was I in earnest and ready to enter the shop at once—next Monday, say ? Good. Well, then, had I a black satin dress ? He nodded approval at my several affirmatives and, sticking his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat, warmed to his subject.

Of course I had had no experience : that was against me. Hands generally began in the ribbons and worked up gradual. But the Boss had given him *carte blanche*, and he was going to put me straight into the showroom. He paused here, expecting me no doubt to be overwhelmed by my good fortune ; but ignorance made me receive the news without the slightest emotion. If he had said I was to be a buyer, I should have been none the wiser. 'Mind you, Missie, there's a lot to learn,' he went on. 'You won't be any good to us for a long time. But if you 'ave brains and become a clever saleswoman—why, in a bit, you might be making your sixty pound a year in commissions ! And I'll start you at twenty-five, all found—that is, you'll live in and be 'oused and fed ! Well, now, come a Monday morning, box and all, any



time after nine and ask for me—Mr. Green. I'll 'ave you at the desk for a while till the strangeness 'uz worn off and you see 'ow the other young ladies manage.'

My mother cried when, on arriving home, I told the assembled family what I had done. I think my father cried too. But no one, after the first chorus of protest, actually opposed me. I was, as I reminded them, twenty-one and my own mistress. As for my sisters, they preserved a stunned silence, broken later in the evening by one of them as spokeswoman. Did I realise that by my pig-headed, mulish, insane behaviour I was jeopardising the fortunes of us all, and bringing the whole family to shame? All that tall talk about honest work was nonsense. If it got about that one of us was in a shop, the rest would be tarred with the same brush. I was degrading not only myself but others. Was I going to think only of myself? Well, then, would I give it up and come back to respectability if they found me an alternative livelihood? Would I promise? Worked on thus by the only argument likely to influence my decision—selfishness—in a weak moment I did promise.

I experienced my first attack of cold feet when, the following Monday, my cab drew up at a side entrance off Tottenham Court Road and the porter received me with the familiarity of one of his own class. Not even Mr. Green's cheerful greeting quite dispelled the sense of doom which then and there settled on my spirits. The growler with my luggage on top disappeared I knew not whither; and I was forthwith conducted to the costume department and handed over to a majestic young lady in a beautifully cut satin dress, who, Mr. Green informed me, was to be my stable companion. Thus, within the space of a few minutes, I received my second shock. Never before had I shared a room with anyone, since the days when I slept in a cot in the night nursery with a nurse in the large bed beside me.

After shaking hands, Miss Legarde piloted me past a line of fitting-rooms into a lobby filled to overflowing with crowded clothes-pegs and chattering girls. A line of fixed wash-basins occupied one end under a window. A peg was cleared and allotted to me and I was told to take off my outdoor things and return to the showroom. While I smoothed my hair and changed into a pair of slippers some prescience had led me to stuff at the last moment into my muff, a hush fell upon the group of girls surrounding me and I felt as though pierced by a thousand questioning eyes. I

had travelled in my black satin dress and was now ready and thankful to escape from that mass of silent criticism.

Back in the showroom, Miss Legarde introduced me to its presiding genius, Mr. Curtis, a pale, sandy-haired man with white eyelashes veiling shifty blue eyes. Alas, it took less than one glance at his pasty face to realise that here was my first implacable enemy. Mr. Curtis had priced me as rapidly as I had gauged him, and the price I saw was remarkably low. With a wintry smile he pointed to a small desk set against the wall midway up the showroom, and, bidding me be seated, put me through a preliminary lesson in the art of booking.

As I have already hinted, my education had been practically nil. Our governess, a nonentity whose honest endeavour to instil the little she knew had always collapsed under my unwillingness to learn, had however managed to impart a smattering of arithmetic into my cranium; chiefly because, figures coming easily to me, I was less bored by them than by any other form of instruction. Figures, I say! But these were invoices made out in cipher: and had to be booked in cipher: added up and balanced in cipher. An hour of these alphabetical gymnastics and my head, already jarred by nervous strain, had become a red-hot coal and had seemingly swelled to twice its original size. Occasionally Mr. Curtis, treading softly like a thin ginger cat, came to replenish the pile and play me with feline humour—a scratch and a bite.

It was the depth of winter and the showroom, warmed only by an open fire out of sight of my desk, grew colder and colder as my head grew hotter and hotter.

I had breakfasted early and it was after two o'clock when one of those girls whom I had noticed in the lobby summoned me to go to dinner.

'As you are a junior, dear,' she said kindly, 'you take a late shift, see?'

After traversing what seemed like endless departments of arm-chairs, wardrobes, pianos and sofas, my guide opened a green baize door, pushed me through, and left me. A wall of smell quickly sent me out again. Roast beef, greens, steam and humanity on an empty stomach turned me sick and faint, and for a moment I saw nothing. Luckily the edge of a sofa was handy and here I sat until another girl from my department coming out from her dinner espied me and urged me to go in at once or I should lose my turn.



Two long trestle tables ran down the sides of an otherwise unfurnished room (unless side tables on which utensils were stacked could be called furniture). A double line of black-coated males occupied the table on the left of the door, while I joined a double row of girls sitting on the right. Large enamel pans of bread alternating with others of cheese and huge enamel jugs of water and unbreakable cruets decorated the centre of each table. The moment I squeezed myself on to the bench where room had been made for me, roast beef (*very* underdone), greens and potatoes on an enamel plate, descended over my shoulder from an unseen hand, and a voice at my elbow invited me to take either beer or stout. These two beverages were also in enamel jugs under the control of the same invisible source. After meat came suet pudding and, after pudding, cheese. If any one rose up unsatisfied, it was surely no one's fault but their own.

Around and across me conversation of the liveliest surged and eddied, and many friendly efforts were made to draw me into it. Questions as to my former employ proved rather embarrassing and I found some difficulty in parrying them. I seemed to have come from nowhere: to have had no beginnings: to have lived a strangely colourless life. If only I could have confessed to starting in the ribbons or buttons of some obscure shop, all would have been plain sailing. But as one by one the questions put to me were set aside by vague replies, evasive and unsatisfactory, glances of doubt came into the frank, laughing eyes around me, and I noted rather sadly such reservations had created an adverse impression which presently left me out of the talk.

Throughout my stay amongst these girls their *camaraderie* was unbroken by a single jarring incident. They simply did not understand the meaning or use for reserve. Secrets were to them synonymous with something shady.

Back again at my desk, I worked at those terrifying invoices till closing time; when Mr. Curtis sarcastically invited me to see if I knew more about clearing up than book-keeping. Thankfully I shut my desk and stretched my cramped limbs by helping to put away petticoats and dressing-gowns at the lower end of the show room.

At six-thirty Miss Legarde collected me, and while I with my hat on waited, changed into mufti, when she escorted me back to the restaurant through the wilderness of furniture (now in the semi-darkness looking like herds of huddled cattle) to eat our last meal. As we entered a welcome odour of fried fish assailed my nostrils,

and my spirits rose accordingly only, however, to drop as quickly. The tables were nearly deserted, Miss Legarde having had a dress to pack after closing time, so that most of the staff had already refreshed themselves and departed. At the end of one table, however, from whence came that invigorating smell, a posse of men and one woman still sat eating; and these Miss Legarde told me in a hushed whisper were buyers, and by such token entitled to a supper of fish. Bread and butter, coffee or cocoa, were for the less exalted such as we; and if humbler folk required more than was put in front of them, they must purchase it at their own expense on the way to their lodgings and discuss it in their own bedrooms. Saying which my companion slipped a wad of butter in between two stout pieces of bread and hid them in her jacket, advising me to follow her example.

We now joined a thin stream of belated men and girls dribbling out into the night, which, as it proceeded, sorted itself into opposite sexes and opposite sides of Gower Street and, like two lines of ants, disappeared into opposite houses. The one we entered was apparently a replica of the entire block and had at one time been a house of some consequence, the railings and door still exhibiting a remnant of past grandeur. Inside the same state of Ichabod caught my eye. Through an open door a crystal chandelier cast a thousand facets above a common deal table; and a very fine specimen of Adam mantelpiece presided over a roaring fire in an ugly Victorian grate. As we looked in on our way upstairs the temptation to stay and warm my feet almost overcame me; but anxiety as to the fate of my luggage drove me into saying I would unpack first. So up we climbed, the darkness of badly lit landings increasing the gloom the farther we went. On the second floor Miss Legarde paused to point out a tap in the wall, remarking that when I wanted water, there it was!

We then climbed again and eventually reached a large attic where, when the single gas-jet was lit, I saw two beds with my imperial trunk between. One dressing-table, one small looking-glass, two cane chairs, two small wash-stands and a deal table completed the furniture: and a large fixed cupboard running the whole side of the room opposite our beds acted as wardrobe, chest of drawers and larder. Its dingy interior made me shudder as Miss Legarde opened the door, revealing a teapot, cups and saucers, half a loaf and an open box of sardines, beside which she popped her unlawful gains.

'Now, dear,' she said, motheringly, 'don't stop to unpack more than you need, but come down and I'll introduce you to all the others.' I took her advice, and, after digging out my night attire and toilet requisites, expressed my readiness to descend. But with a sudden feeling of panic, I reopened my trunk to unearth my small work-basket and a bit of embroidery. If, among all those strangers, I held on to these tokens of the home I felt I should never see again, perhaps it would not seem so desperately far away.

I went into the sitting-room with Miss Legarde's arm round my waist. They were all nice girls, brimful of talk and curiosity like those I had encountered earlier in the day, and with the grandest names outside Debrett I had ever heard—Miss Desborough, Miss De Montmorency, Miss Delincourt, Miss Devere, and so on. I marvelled as one by one they were trotted out in exchange for my homely surname of Jones. I was to learn later that these were all pseudonyms, but for what purpose they were assumed I never discovered. Perhaps it was through delicacy at the contrast between mine and theirs that they one and all from then onwards refused to address me as Miss Jones, adopting instead the sobriquet of 'Little Princess,' or, more often the laconic 'Dear.'

That night, though I went to bed hungry, having refused to share Miss Legarde's sardines, I slept well.

I woke to find her half-dressed, standing at the dressing-table rubbing oil into her chest. She said this kept out the cold. I fancy her ablutions were of secondary importance. By the light of the feeble gas-jet, blown into a fork within its wire cage, I saw that snow darkened our ill-fitting window. But I had little time to pause and shiver. Washing in penny numbers in ice-cold water was a new experience and took more time than I could well afford. And sharing a very small looking-glass was another and equally trying novelty. But the knowledge that, whatever else went by the board, we had to be past the porter's box by eight o'clock, kept me from dwelling unduly on communal hardships.

Like the night before, only conversely, men were trickling out of the houses opposite as we girls trickled out of ours, to merge into a common stream at the porter's door.

Breakfast proved a hurried meal. Bacon, marmalade or jam could only be had by paying for them: twopence, I think, for bacon and a penny for marmalade or jam. I could afford neither;

but as there was abundance of bread and butter, tea and coffee, that was no great matter. By nine o'clock we had to be in our satin dresses, and the showroom also dressed and in its right mind. But any spare time saved between eight and nine could be enjoyed toasting ourselves at the fire. By an unwritten law, those accounted the élite made an inner circle of chairs, while the lesser fry standing behind barely felt its glow.

The talk during this interval greatly entertained me. I remember the chief orator that first morning claimed to be a friend of the confidential maid of the then Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Alexandra. Secrets of the august toilet were retailed to a breathless audience; and revelations of the most improbable kind were only stemmed by the arrival of a customer. This early bird disposed of, Mr. Curtis next came along and, stopping at the counter where silk petticoats had just been displayed, segregated two or three from the others, remarking: 'This lot must be cleared right away. They aren't going well. Anyone selling them gets double commission. Now then, see what you can do!' (A sidelight on persuasive saleship I have never forgotten!)

How soon youth can adapt itself to new environments, be they never so strange, was proved in the days which followed. The feeling that, like the old woman in the fable, 'This is none of I' gave place to a conviction that the life of ease, unpunctuality, walks with the dogs, late dinners and parties, were the myths. By the end of the week, when I was free to go where I would from Saturday midday to Sunday night, it was my homecoming that struck the note of unreality. Years, surely, had passed since the previous Monday. And, when I was accused of having grown perceptibly thinner, lack of time to achieve this feat was the last argument I thought of using to refute it.

Once again all possible pressure was brought to bear upon me to 'throw up that dreadful shop.' As, however, nothing else in the shape of a livelihood offered, I turned a deaf ear. And Sunday evening saw me journeying Londonwards, though this time not alone, but under the wing of a family friend who often spent his Sundays with us. How delicious it was to be handed in and out of trains and buses, and be shepherded from bumps and unpleasantness down the dark, deserted streets to my lodgings. All those unconsidered attentions which throughout my life I had taken for granted were now balm to my hurt mind, starved as it had been during the foregoing week for its accustomed homage.

As we stood waiting on the step (latchkeys were not allowed) several other late-comers collected around us. And when the dark forbidding door swung back, throwing a flood of light on our group, many curious eyes were turned on my tall companion. His slightly satanic beauty was just such as to excite their most romantic admiration. Love affairs played a considerable part in off-time conversation. Confidences poured daily into my ears, and I felt certain I should now be expected to return them. It came to me in a flash that, without actual dishonesty, I might foster the idea that I was already 'walking out' with this old friend to my own advantage. And with this notion fermenting in my brain, I made a lingering good-bye.

For some days, as I sat at my desk, I had been subconsciously aware of a male figure hovering near by. But as I seldom looked up, it was only when overtures of a direct kind began to interrupt my invoicing that I realised the young man in the fur department adjoining was straying over often into ours and paying me unwelcome attention. By all counts he was a great beau; or, as he himself expressed it, 'a bit of a toff.' The other girls very soon made covert allusions to my conquest; but, seeing my annoyance, had not dared go further with their banter. Well, a rumour that I had been escorted home on Sunday night getting to the right ears might prove a useful check upon Mr. Fairley's fancy.

So next day saw me wearing my twenty-first birthday diamond ring on the third finger of my left hand, and this I kept well in evidence as I wrote up the books. But I didn't know my man! That ring merely whetted his gallantry. Little offerings constantly arrived on my desk and my poor tired brain ran out of excuses for declining them. Mr. Fairley took to choosing the hour of the second dinner shift for his calls, when the showroom was at its emptiest both of assistants and customers. And pinned in my desk, I had to listen to his own estimate of how exceptional he was in every way. He would have me understand he not only possessed the voice of an archangel, but sang in a fashionable West End choir next to his friend Lord Freddie Something. His collar was an inch higher than any other in the shop and he shot his linen like a conjurer. Truly I ought to have been proud! But Mr. Curtis's pale eye, searching for flaws in my behaviour, had spotted these attentions and was now making them a handle for some humiliating rebukes; and it was likely I should soon have been in considerable hot water had not counter-affairs come to my aid.

Early in the second week of my life at Sweetbread's, I received a letter marked 'Urgent' from the sister to whom I had given my promise, enclosing another in an unknown hand, also addressed to me, requesting me to call at an address in Ashley Gardens between twelve and two o'clock on this very day. It took me some time to unravel the mystery of the second letter which appeared to be in answer to one I had written.

This is what I eventually evolved from re-reading first one and then the other missive:

Under the heading COMPANIONS DISENGAGED my sister had advertised in the *Morning Post* as from me. And the writer of the second letter, replying to the advertisement, had desired an interview with a view to engagement. The delay caused by postal transit had reduced my notice of the appointment to about two hours.

Here was a dilemma! My sister in no uncertain terms now demanded the fulfilment of my promise. 'Of course,' she wrote, 'you *must* keep the appointment. Throw up Sweetbread's *at once*. You are as good as engaged. Miss X has only to see you. You must, *must*, MUST, etc.'

Must I indeed throw up my bone for a shadow? Somewhere in the back of my mind a text from the Bible, imperfectly remembered, seemed to demand that I should as inexorably as did my sister: 'Swear to your neighbour and disappoint him not though it be to your own hurt.'

Perhaps without burning my boats and by going to see the lady I could keep my security and my promise. I consulted Miss Legarde as to the possibility of getting two hours' leave of absence. She was sanguine, but advised me to seek it at the fountain-head, not from Mr. Curtis who would certainly refuse. So off I went in search of my ally, Mr. Green, who without putting any awkward questions granted me as much time off as I needed.

So far, so good. Dashing into mufti and chartering a hansom I somehow managed to reach my destination just as Big Ben boomed out his twelve sonorous strokes. And before I had time to assemble my wits I found myself in the presence of a little old lady with a face like a sucked orange and eyes like gimlets, who at once began a minor inquisition. Never before had I answered so many questions. Metaphorically I was turned inside out and upside down, shaken, pinched, put through the mangle, weighed and found wanting. Why had we suddenly become poor? If we



really were poor now, why had I written on crested paper? Perhaps the crest was not ours? And if it was not, why had I used it? Trivialities such as these jostled perfectly justifiable curiosity with such speed that my replies grew rather wild. Everything I said, both sane and silly, appeared to give the same grave dissatisfaction. Then, just as I was congratulating myself upon my acumen in not having given in my notice at Sweetbread's, and was preparing thankfully to accept my *congé*, Miss X expressed a wish for me to spend the coming week-end with her at her house in the country—'on approval.'

Oh, that promise! The less anxious I showed myself to agree to this, the more determined she became. In the end she would take no refusal. As the one thing I had managed to withhold amongst the many she had dug out of me was my present occupation, I could not now confess it without reproach. It was a tight hole. If I went to H—— for the week-end, I must first throw up the shop. Temporising, I escaped saying I must consult my people and would telegraph their decision.

I looked at my watch. It was already half-past one and I had still to find a post office and get off a telegram to my sister. But first the need of a cup of tea to clear my head and induce clear thinking sent me into the first refreshment place I could find. In my perturbed state I must have turned off into some rather low streets; for I found myself in an unknown quarter with no one in sight to ask the way. There was, however, what I took to be a café immediately opposite, and into this, though it led down a flight of stairs, I nothing doubting went. The floor was sanded, the atmosphere sour with stale smoke and drink, and the company sitting at small iron tables eyed me with open stares. When I asked for a pot of tea, the manner of the bold-faced waitress made me increasingly ill at ease. But with my native obstinacy I never thought of flight. And after some delay a cup of tea did arrive, lukewarm, black as ink and tasting like poison, with a jug of dusty milk and two stained lumps of sugar in the saucer. I made a pretence of drinking in a silence which grew eerie by its length. I walked out with every eye on me and a sensation in my lower limbs familiar in nightmares—a desire to run thwarted by leaden inability. And as I gained the pavement and paused to take in a draught of clean air, a roar of coarse laughter drifted up the stairway.

After despatching my telegram, the money left in my pocket

did not admit of a return hansom. Buses and Shanks's pony brought me by stages back to Sweetbread's—long past the hour for the last dinner shift. As I hastened through the showroom on my way to the lobby, I nearly knocked down a tailor coming out of one of the fitting-rooms with a costume on his arm. He salaamed low with profuse apologies for his clumsiness; then recognising my face under my best hat, relapsed into an easy laugh: 'Well, I say,' he exclaimed, 'if I didn't take you for a lady!' The joke was a better one than he knew, and I too enjoyed it thoroughly.

No sooner was I back in my satin dress and seated at my desk snowed under with papers and books, than I beheld our Vicar's daughter coming up the showroom. In that age of snobs, of which I was as big a one as any, even a clergyman's daughter would have looked down her nose at the thing I was doing. And so well imbued was I with the spirit of the age that, like the coward I was, I slipped from my perch and slunk behind a model.

If I had hoped for speedy release, I was woefully mistaken. That wretched female kept me dodging round and round the costumes till I could hardly contain myself for exasperation. And once we very nearly collided. And when, at long last, she took her departure, if a total stranger didn't pick me out of all the girls standing about and insist that I and only I should serve her. Alas, she belonged to that great army of undecided women who come expecting their minds to be made up for them. With all my nervous energy concentrated on finishing the day's invoicing and dealing with my fate for the week-end, I had to wander from model to model, choosing and cancelling, match cloth with silk in other departments and work up estimates, only to be told they were beyond her purse; when the game began all over again. Finally, I shipped my tormenter off on to a more experienced hand who, in less than no time, clinched an order far in excess of anything I had proposed.

Towards closing-time my stack of invoices rose higher than ever. No matter how often I worked them down, Mr. Curtis had always another batch. 'He's a pig!' whispered Miss Legarde when, coming to see if I was ready to leave, she found me struggling with the largest pile I had yet had. I had done myself no good by going to a higher authority for my leave of absence; and this I saw, by the satisfied gleam under his white eyelashes as he noted my hot face, was Mr. Curtis's petty revenge. As the pressure



increased, I grew muddled and mistakes increased also. The few sips of tea I had had at midday was all that had passed my lips since breakfast, and now it was six o'clock. The rest of the staff were clearing up, but I must stay and finish to the last entry. Fortunately, Mr. Curtis, having deposited his heaviest consignment, departed too. Which was specially lucky as, no sooner had his angular figure disappeared, than the answer to my telegram arrived.

*Congratulations! Give in your notice at once, it ran.*

I closed my desk and, for the second time that day, went in search of Mr. Green. I found him with his hat and coat on, locking up his office door; but, with his invariable kindness, he reopened it and bade me enter. 'Well, Missie,' he panted, 'what's the trouble now?'

Without any reserve I laid the whole case before him, only omitting the one fact that Miss X had invited me 'on appro.'

He laid his squat, drab hand on mine and gave it a mighty squeeze. 'I'm real glad,' he said, earnestly. 'You come along 'ere to-morrow morning and get your bit o' salary. We'd 'uv made a good business woman of you, if you'd 'uv stayed. But you ain't the cut. And I reckon it's been a stiff bit o' collar work, this fortnight 'as, for the likes of you!'

That was a long speech for one of his habit, and his tongue like a large red sausage seemed about to choke him with its size. He misread the anxiety in my face, and as soon as he had recovered his wind, continued: 'Just you run off now and think no more about it. I know you're grateful and all that.' Then, seeing the tears start in my eyes, and pretending to hear someone calling, he snatched up his hat and toddled away as fast as his bow legs could carry him.

That little bit of sympathy did wonders. I went back to my Herculean labour and polished it off in double-quick time; managing to arrive in the restaurant five minutes before it closed. I was too tired and excited to be hungry; but a cup of boiling coffee warmed my chilled blood and arrested a sensation of floating without legs which had been gaining on me all day.

How thankful I was I had never completely unpacked!

As I had come without explaining myself to my colleagues, I thought it best to leave in the same manner. The appointed day for my departure being Saturday, this would be easy of accomplishment, as everyone else would be bustling off somewhere that afternoon and be too much engrossed in their own affairs to notice me;

and half an hour's packing would be sufficient to collect my things.

Nevertheless, when the day arrived I was sorry enough not to say 'good-bye' to my many girl friends. I fancy Mr. Curtis had got wind of my coming release. His feline tactics intensified as the opportunities for practising them lessened. But with a time-limit ahead, they failed to depress me as of yore, and my resilience positively maddened him. The other girls undoubtedly suffered in consequence. With an overflow of acidity he reduced Miss Devere to open tears in the showroom, and murmurs of 'That brute' followed his retreating figure from more than one source.

Midday Saturday—a fortnight only from my induction—I passed out of my brief experience in shopland: sad to go without a handshake from my numerous friends, but thankful to escape from the attentions of Mr. Fairley and the clutches of Mr. Curtis. The latter eyed me balefully but said nothing as I passed him in the lobby. His hands were full of invoices at the time, and it came to me that, could he have thrust them down my throat, it would have been a relief.

Many months after, while gazing into a shop window in Regent Street, someone clutched my arm, and Miss Devere's bright face looked into mine. 'Little Princess,' she cried, 'why did you run away? Married, of course, and ever so happy!'

The crowd pushed us asunder and, feeling she would be saddened if I didn't agree to the only proper solution of the mystery, I smiled a non-committal answer across their heads.

As for my adventure 'on appro,' it proved the shadow for a bone I had anticipated.

I arrived at H—— in time for tea on Saturday and I left after luncheon on the following Monday, pulverised to a mental jelly by the questions I had answered. I was expected to give chapter and verse for every remark I made, however simple. Only a walking encyclopædia could have survived intact. Yet at parting Miss X kissed me with some effusion, remarking regretfully that, in consequence of the weakness of my brain, she was unable to avail herself of my service.

It was a bitter pill, but one consolation was vouchsafed me.

A young nephew of my hostess also spent the week-end at H——. And on Sunday afternoon he and I went a delightful ramble over the Surrey Downs. That we were allowed—nay,

commanded to do this unchaperoned—rather surprised me, seeing that Miss X was of so suspicious a nature. And had I not, in an expansive moment, suddenly exploded over the intolerable cross-examination to which I had been subjected since my arrival, I might have gone away thinking better things of my inquisitor.

‘Does she take me for an impostor?’ I asked, angrily.

‘I’m sure she does,’ was his frank reply. ‘But don’t worry! No one puts up with it for long. You’d be more than an angel if you did. It’s a feather in your cap she won’t engage you—shows you’ve got a backbone, don’t you know!’ Then he gave a delightful little chuckle, adding: ‘She told me to take you out this afternoon and give you a good pumping—that’s why we are taking this walk!’

So I returned to the roof-tree whence I came—broken in mind and purse!

Alas and alack! Had I but stuck to my guns in shopland, I might even now be a buyer, earning my hundreds a year and eating fish dinners amongst a posse of black-coated men—the pinnacle of every shop-girl’s ambition forty years ago!

## THE MYSTERY OF THE HAWASH.

BY FRANK E. HAYTER, F.Z.S.

RUNNING parallel with the Abyssinia-Somaliland border is a vast region of burning desert, foetid swamp, and eternal fog into which flows the Hawash—the mystery river of Abyssinia—there to disappear. Constantly fed during its seven hundred miles' course by mountain torrents which thunder down from a plateau eight thousand feet high, this mighty stream, one hundred and fifty yards wide and enormously deep on its arrival at the plains, never reaches the sea—a puzzle which has excited the curiosity of generations of geographers.

To be quite candid, I had never heard of the Hawash, much less of its famous disappearing act, until my arrival in Abyssinia in the winter of 1924. Then I was regaled with amazing and detailed legends of vast caverns which received the waters, and of subterranean tunnels that conveyed them to the sea. All of which was very interesting, but, as I was then engaged in capturing Hamadryas baboons for the London Zoological Society—a full-time job—it was not until the end of February, 1925, that I was able to study this fascinating subject.

I was not long in discovering that no one, either Abyssinian or European, had the slightest knowledge of how or where the Hawash ended; and the more convinced I was upon this point the more determined I became to visit the region and solve the problem once and for all.

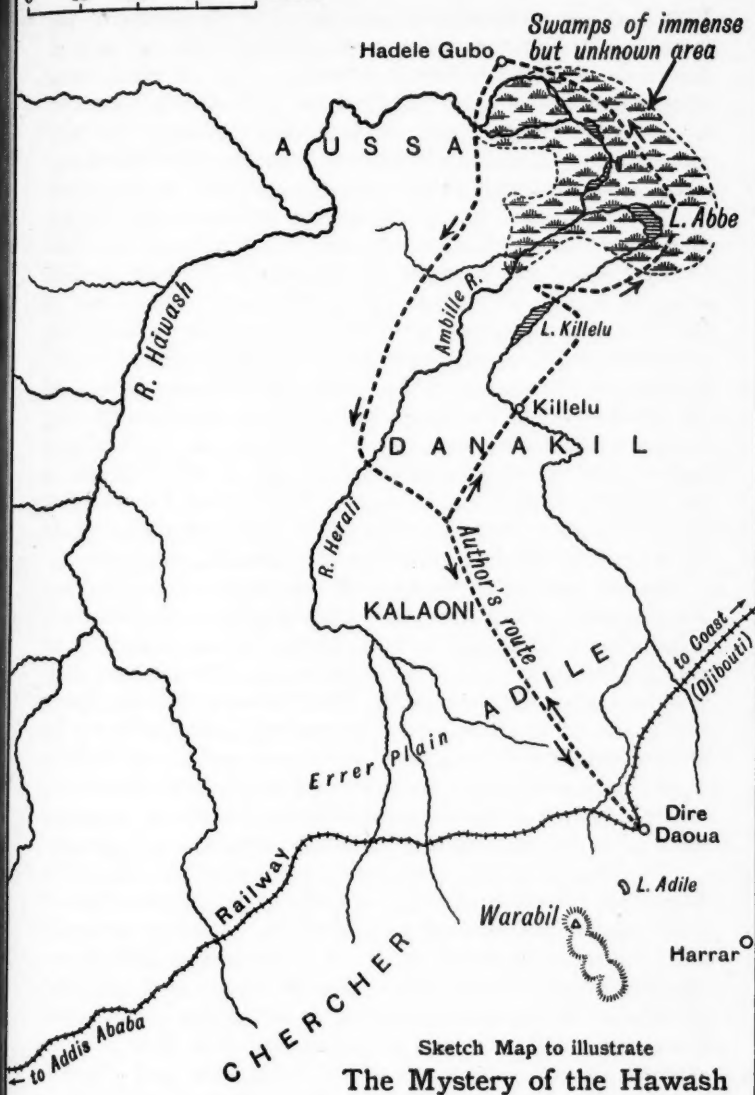
Forthwith I broached the subject to Signor Umberto, the proprietor of the Hôtel d'Italie at Dire Daoua, on the Djibuti-Addis Ababa railway, where I had taken up my headquarters. He was a taciturn kind of individual, and, looking at me with a pitying smile, his only remark was:

'Please let me know to whom I shall send your personal belongings when you do not return.'

Although this cheery reply did not alter my determination to do the trek, I thought it wise to make a few general enquiries about the country.

Information was very meagre. Only five caravans, I was told, had attempted to penetrate the region in the past twenty years.

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Emery Walker Ltd. ac.

Each had been systematically annihilated by the Danakils—the most blood-thirsty, treacherous, and generally depraved race in the whole of Northern Africa. Further, I was informed, there were endless deserts where water was not to be found, impassable swamps reeking with fever, and fogs which enveloped the land for weeks on end, and in which a man might wander without any sense of direction until he fell exhausted and died. I cannot say that this information was exactly helpful, but it certainly did not alter my decision, and a few days later I was ready for the trek.

My caravan was composed of five camels, the only possible animal transport, at any rate for the first part of the journey, a headman, Ali, a personal boy, Mohammed, and four camel boys, all Somali Arabs. I had purposely excluded Abyssinians from the personnel of the caravan, having heard that Arabs not only stand the intense heat of the desert far better, but also because they are more reliable in a tight corner. Moreover, the Abyssinian is useless when it comes to managing camels. I told Umberto of my decision. 'Very wise indeed,' he replied, 'but I don't think you need have worried about the choice, for an Abyssinian would rather commit suicide than venture into Danakil country!'

On the morning of February 25 the camels were loaded up, one carrying two large iron water-tanks, another a small tent and a box of assorted presents, a third rations, and the other two for riding. For arms I had a Winchester .405, a twelve-bore shotgun, and a .45 Colt automatic. The Arabs carried only spears and knives. Soon after daybreak we were away and penetrating the scrub country which lay between Dire Daoua and the desert lying to the north of it. I did not learn until my return to that station weeks later that a few hours after we had started official orders had come through intimating that I was not to be allowed to proceed!

The going for the first three days was not so bad, but the nights were made hideous by hyenas and packs of jackals which howled round the camp from dark until daybreak. About noon on the third day we arrived at a small hill at the foot of which was a plentiful supply of fresh water. Here we stayed until midnight, for the heat during the day had been so terrific that I had decided from now onwards to trek by moonlight. Mile after mile we covered without seeing a sign of any living thing, and wherever we looked our eyes rested on sand and stunted scrub. The following evening I managed to obtain a little sleep, for the animal chorus was not so much in evidence, and again at midnight we

moved off, finally making camp at daybreak on the slopes of a long sandstone ridge. Here we had been informed we should find plenty of water. Instead we discovered dry pits.

Up to now I had not seen a single native, and was beginning to believe that the hair-raising stories of the cut-throat Danakil tribes had about as much foundation in fact as the legendary caves and channels of the Hawash, when I was sadly disillusioned. From behind a line of boulders, about forty yards distant, there emerged the most repulsive-looking savage I had ever seen. He was not more than five feet ten in height, but owing to some deformity of the hips appeared to be much taller. This deformity had the effect of emphasising his monstrous, bulging stomach, stick-like arms and legs, and small head from which rose a spreading mop of matted hair. As I gazed at him I could not help comparing him with some particularly filthy spider. He was perfectly naked, with the exception of an untanned hide belt, into which was stuck a long knife. In his hand he held a broad-bladed spear and hippopotamus-hide shield. As I looked I came to the conclusion that if this monstrosity were a representative example of the Danakil tribesman—well, the less we saw of them the better.

Telling Ali to interrogate him concerning the next water-holes, I dismounted, and walked up the spur of the ridge some twenty yards distant from where the native stood, for it occurred to me that he was hardly likely to be alone, and I was not taking any chances with a mob of his friends and relatives. But though I scanned the whole ridge and the desert beyond, not another native could I see. I then turned my attention to Ali, who had reached the Danakil and was giving him what appeared to be a friendly greeting. He might as well have talked to a stone image, for with the exception of grunting, and shifting his spear to the other hand, the man neither spoke nor moved.

Apparently things were at a deadlock, and with the hope of getting some information concerning the next water, which before very long would be a matter of vital importance to us, I called for some presents, strings of gaudy beads and a penknife, telling Ali to offer them to the Danakil. His reply was to spit on the ground, turn on his heel, and disappear from view into the bed of a dried-up water-course.

Ali, flourishing his spear, started in pursuit, but I called him back, for I knew only too well that any information we might obtain from this creature by 'gentle suasion' would be one string



of lies, uttered with the sole object of sending us into the desert to search for a mythical water-hole until we perished from thirst. There was nothing for it but to attempt to reach a spot which Ali said was named Killelu, but as to whether such a village did exist, or was another example of native imagination, he did not know. According to Ali, it should be three days' trek away; and with luck, and very careful rationing of water we might make it all right. At midnight, therefore, we again set off, and at dawn camped, trekking on with the coming darkness.

All that night we were haunted by the spectre of thirst, for we had drunk our last drop of water soon after darkness fell. There was no question now of halting at dawn. Under a burnished sky of shimmering heat we went forward, searching the horizon for the village that might not exist. By midday the camels had slowed down until we were only just moving. Another hour or so and they would stop. And then, through the haze I saw a thin spiral of smoke rising from the desert some little distance ahead. As we drew nearer, I could see that the smoke came from an encampment, on the outskirts of which were about forty natives standing motionless in a semicircle round several small mounds, and awaiting our arrival. Riding ahead Ali dismounted, and walking up to one of them who, by his leopard-skin cloak, appeared to be the chief, saluted him. But this graven image vouchsafed no reply.

Suddenly the full truth of the situation dawned upon me. The small mounds were excavations from the water-holes, and round them the natives, who were obviously Danakils, had drawn a cordon. . . . They were breaking the first law of the desert. Water lay within our reach, but we were not going to be allowed to touch it!

Already Ali and the boys were unstrapping the water-tanks, a performance which was watched by the Danakils with considerable amusement. These devils positively radiated joy when the tanks were carried towards the holes, and their chief called on Ali to stop and turn aside. In vain did Ali, speaking in Arabic, which the Danakils well understood, beseech them to let us drink, fill our tanks, and go in peace. From pleading he changed to threats, and commenced to wave my twelve-bore in the air, his fingers all the time toying with the cartridge-belt slung across his shoulders. But the only reply he received was a chorus of mocking laughter.

There was no getting away from the fact that we were in a pretty tight corner, and that something had to be done quickly. Calling to Ali to load the twelve-bore, I unslung my Winchester



and, followed by the boys, strode over to where the chief stood grinning at our plight. The torment I was suffering from thirst made me long to drill a hole in him, but I would palaver first. Whichever way matters went I was determined to get one drink of that water. The proffering of presents was, of course, out of the question, for the Danakils had only to guard their water-holes until we died from thirst, when they would be able to help themselves to the entire caravan, camels, rifles, ammunition, beads, knives and everything. Bluff might be of some use, but for six men, only two of whom had firearms, to attempt to bluff thirty or forty armed savages, was a tall order. And then came an inspiration. Calling Ali, I told him to interpret for me:

'Tell this chief,' I said, 'that once there was a man who went into a distant country and became lost. He asked many people the way, but they refused to tell him. At last he came to the chief of the country and said: "I am lost, and no one will tell me the way. What shall I do?" And the chief replied, "Go and die, for I obey not the law of the desert." "Very well," said the man, "I will die, but perhaps I shall be lost in the new country also. You must come with me as my guide!" Thereupon he killed the chief first, and himself afterwards.'

As Ali finished interpreting I saw the chief's crafty eyes look first at his spear and those of his followers, then at my Winchester, and his glance wavered. He knew exactly what I intended to do if he persisted in his refusal to give us water, though my direct threat had been veiled in parable; and in guessing that I was going to put up a fight for the water-holes, in which he would certainly have been the first casualty, he was right. After a few moments' silence he gave an order, and by signs beckoned us to pass through the tribesmen, who had now gathered into two groups on each side of the water-holes. His ruse was clever, but personally I was not desirous of being speared to death in the pits, and I ordered Ali to mount his camel, hold the shotgun ready, and take up a position between the pits and one group of Danakils, while I took up a similar position opposite the rest of the tribesmen. Then calling to the boys, I told them to go down to the pits, fill the water-tanks, and return to the camels, when we would follow them.

After what seemed an age the tanks were filled with steaming muddy water, strapped on to the camels once more, and we were ready to start. There was at least a hope that we might get clear of the tribesmen without a fight, and the moment had now arrived

which would settle the matter. The only precaution possible was to order the boys to commence trekking, while Ali and I sat on our camels as a sort of rear-guard until the caravan was well on its way. I could see that the chief was almost insane with suppressed rage, and though urged, again and again, by his followers to attack us, he dared not do so then, for he knew exactly what the ending would be—at any rate so far as he himself was concerned. It was not until the baggage camels and camel boys were dots on the horizon that we turned to follow them. Then in a high-pitched voice, that at times rose to a shriek, the Danakil chief commenced a tirade against us, though not a word could I understand.

As we urged our camels along, I asked Ali what it was all about.

‘He is calling down curses upon us,’ the Arab replied, ‘and swears that he and his people will never leave us, neither by day nor by night.’

‘We are going to leave them, anyway, Ali,’ I said. I was so confident that we were clear of all danger from the tribesmen that Ali’s reply came as a nasty shock:

‘But, Effendi, you do not know these men. . . . They are desert dwellers, and travel fast—yes, even faster than the fastest camels; we shall see more of them yet. Perhaps not to-night, or to-morrow, but some time soon we shall see them.’

Telling Ali that he was talking rot I halted the caravan, for we had caught up with it and were now some distance away from the Danakils, and opened the water-tanks. Then, with man and beast refreshed, we pushed on, despite the terrible heat, towards Lake Killelu which two of the camel boys assured me was only three days’ trek away. We carried on until late at night when, completely exhausted, we threw ourselves on the sand and were not long in falling asleep.

I awoke to find one of Ali’s hands spread across my mouth, while the other was gently shaking my shoulder. Silently he roused the boys, signed to us to mount, and called the camels to their feet. There was no moon, but the night was not dark. In vain I looked for the cause of the Arab’s silent warning, but could see nothing beyond endless drifts of sand dotted with low scrub. Making for a point where the scrub thinned a little, Ali led us up a slight rise, skirted the crest for several hundred yards, and then came to a halt. He gazed intently across the desert below us and then suddenly stiffened in his saddle, pointing towards the spot

whence we had come. For a second I could see nothing but the dark patches of scrub. Then at last I fancied I detected a movement away to the left. At first it seemed to be a pack of jackals that, headed by their leader, were trotting along in single file with monotonous regularity. A minute passed and they became more distinct, and now their gait was very different from that of an animal.

'Come, Effendi,' said Ali. 'These desert dwellers travel fast, even as I told you.'

There was no need to urge the camel boys on, for their eyes, practised to the shifting lights of the ever-changing desert, had picked out the thin spear shafts of the Danakils against the neutral background of sand, even before I had realised they were men at all, and when I turned to follow Ali they were a hundred yards away, and trekking fast.

Dawn found us exhausted, but there was as yet no question of halting. Hour after hour of that awful day the pitiless sun blazed down upon us, burning into the sand until its reflected heat seemed to come from the glowing embers of some smouldering fire. For three days we carried on, snatching brief intervals of sleep at night, but always with two of us on guard some distance from camp to give warning of any attack.

Towards dawn of the third day I fancied I could feel currents of cool, damp air that occasionally drifted around us, and was certain that we were approaching the lake. My view was shared by Ali, who ordered the camel boys to slacken their pace. After an hour of slow progress in a north-westerly direction, he declared he could now 'smell water.' The sun came up like a ball of fire in the grey, starless sky, and soon glowed once more like a furnace—but not upon sand. Glorious deliverance! Looking down at the ground I could see that we were on the fringe of a shallow swamp. Ahead was a line of rank grass which ran like a ribbon of emerald across the entire horizon. In half an hour we had reached it, forced a passage through, and there before us, shining like a disc of burnished steel, was the lake . . . clear, fresh, cool water, far more precious at the moment than all the gold in the world!

It was a large expanse of water, nearly two miles in length and a mile wide, and on its surface floated thousands of birds that appeared to be duck. The very thought of a meal, in which half a dozen of these birds formed the principal course, was not to be resisted, though the report of my twelve-bore in that soundless space might bring every Danakil in Africa around us. With

this object in view, I decided to make for the western shore, where I had noticed a straggling patch of weeds which I could use as cover. From that position a 'brown' along the surface of the water would account for as many birds as we could eat at one sitting! Unsporting? but we were hungry, and I dared not risk firing more than one shot. Taking one of the camel boys, I set off, leaving Ali busy lighting a fire of dry sticks around which he had fashioned a rude oven of flat stones. He meant to make a good job of the cooking—now it was up to me! Skirting the rank grass belt, we descended a low hill. To gain a better view of the path to the reeds, I walked to the summit of the hill, and, having satisfied myself as to the best route, was beginning to descend when I heard the boy utter a low cry. Turning, I found him gazing across the desert that lay to the south, and pointing with a trembling finger along our trail. Almost immediately I could see the cause of his fright. A long line of tribesmen, jogging along in single file and leaving the trail to make a detour which should bring them to the western shore of the lake.

Though I took but a fleeting glance at them I could distinctly see the sun flashing on their spears, and some distance in the rear an ungainly figure that seemed to be all arms, legs, and stomach. It was the human spider we had seen at the beginning of the trek. The next moment we were tearing down the hill and making for camp. In a few minutes Ali had crushed the stone slabs on to the fire, scattered soil on them, and called the camels to their feet. Back along our tracks we hurried, and then turned northward to put the lake between ourselves and our pursuers. It was my intention to make for the Ambille River which, according to the quite unreliable map I possessed of the central portion of the Abyssinian-Somaliland border, should not be more than two days' trek; and then on again to the Hawash, and safety. It appeared to be an excellent plan until we reached the Ambille. Only then did we realise that the river at this point was non-existent. Instead, was a vast area of swamp, to penetrate which was absolutely impossible.

There was nothing for it but to retrace our steps with the ever-present danger of walking into the Danakils, the last thing any of us wished to happen, for there could be but one end to a clash with these tribesmen in this type of country. To avert the danger as far as possible, we took the risk of getting the camels bogged, and bore as much to the eastward as we dared. Often the camels were pulled up by the softness of the ground, but they managed

to struggle out of the mire and thus avert disaster. Our only hope now was to make a wide detour, round the whole of the swamp area, though what the journey might entail we could not tell, for no white man had ever penetrated the region into which we were forced to trek.

Ali's one object was to reach the friendly village of Hadele Gubo, which he believed lay in the Aussa country, and two days' trek from the Hawash. We accordingly turned north-eastward, and on the second day arrived exhausted at the crest of a long, undulating ridge, up which we had struggled for more than ten hours. We expected to see an endless plain of swampy land, for according to my map we should be descending the slopes of the ridge on which we now stood, until we reached sea-level. Instead, an endless sea of white fog spread out before us, obliterating every inch of the country as far as the eye could reach. Without giving a thought to the nature of the land which lay under that woolly pall, we all gave a great shout of delight, for here, at any rate for the moment, was safety. Once under the friendly cover of the fog curtain we should experience no difficulty in eluding our pursuers. We accordingly rode down the hillside, crossed a narrow strip of sun-scorching plain, and plunged into clouds of thin mist that drifted in eddies about us. At first it was difficult to discern any object, but soon our eyes became more accustomed to the strange conditions, and we were able to see the faint outline of a narrow track. The going was excellent; solid yet springy ground that suited the camels well. As we proceeded, small pools of water appeared on either side of the pathway, and the air which had been moist at first, now became damp and heavy.

Sunset was a strange experience. At one moment we were surrounded by silvery mist, the next by heavy clouds of grey fog, followed by the most intense darkness. All hope of pushing on along the track was now out of the question, so we made camp. As it was very unlikely, I fondly told myself, that the Danakils would enter this fog-ridden area, I looked forward to the first good night's rest I was to enjoy since starting on the trek. But though I was tired out, and heavy-eyed, sleep would not come. Soon I discovered that Ali and the boys were in a like plight, due principally to the cold vapour which seemed to penetrate the heaviest blanket. It was about four o'clock when I did drop off into a fitful doze.

I must have slept for about two hours when I was awakened

by a curious noise which seemed to come from the swampy ground on our right. It sounded at first as though some animal were dragging itself along the muddy margin of a near-by pool. Suddenly Ali appeared, crawling towards me on hands and knees: 'The desert dwellers are here, Effendi,' he whispered. . . . 'Do not move, or make a sound, they are searching for us on another track nearer the water. Hark! you can hear the noise their feet make as they pass through the mud.' It would have been madness to call the camels up, for the inevitable grunt the camel makes when rising or going down would have told the tribesmen all they wished to know. So in utter silence, and trembling with suspense, we waited for the sounds to die away in the distance.

As dawn came the fog gradually lightened, but for an hour or more it was still too dense for us to see more than a few feet ahead. Just before we started forward, for there was no other choice unless we wished to turn back, and starve or die of thirst in the desert, a dim shape passed across the track, not twenty yards distant, and as the lighter strata of mist drifted past I could see the silhouetted form of a Danakil warrior. With a prickly sensation in the back of my scalp, I saw him disappear into the fog, heard him wading through the swamp, and then imitate the call of a bird, which was answered from a distant point on our right. Had he seen us, and was signalling the fact to his fellow-trackers? We should very soon know; but no attack came—no sound to break the eerie stillness. At last it grew sufficiently light, and I deemed it safe for us to move off, but the problem was in which direction? Personally, I had almost reached the state in which I did not much care where we went, or what happened to us. I had come all this way to try and solve the mystery of the Hawash, not to play hide and seek with a tribe of blood-thirsty cut-throats! Taking the line of least resistance I led off along the narrow track we had first struck on entering the swamps. The farther we proceeded, the less dense became the fog; and the question struck me with forcible suddenness: 'What if the fog should lift?'

It was a possibility which until that moment had occurred to none of us, but as the minutes passed it assumed a problem of life and death. By midday it had thinned to such an extent that broad beams of sunlight were occasionally filtering through and gleaming on pools of foul-smelling morass, choked with rotten vegetation. So long as it did not give away our position to the



Danakils I welcomed its warmth; also by its light we were able to make good progress along the track. But what a place to play 'I Spy!' All that day, and the greater part of the next night we struggled on, and by the merest good fortune saw no signs of the Danakils. In fact we began to get so confident of having shaken them off that we took few precautions, and before daybreak even risked lighting a fire, the first we had enjoyed since leaving the Danakil water-holes. Early in the morning we resumed our journey, still shrouded in the eternal fog. I computed that by now we should have almost penetrated to the northern limit of the swamp area, and hopes ran high. But not for long.

Without any warning the track, which had been our salvation until that moment, suddenly ceased, and in its place was an interminable vista of reed-covered mud and stagnant water. With the base of their spear shafts the boys prodded the ooze in an endeavour to find some sort of a firm path through the swamps, for once the camels were bogged the game would be completely up. For three hideous days, and for three more hideous nights we were in those reeking, fever-stricken swamps, moving, not mile by mile, but foot by foot; exhausted, a prey for millions of mosquitoes, and nearly demented by the ear-splitting chorus of countless frogs. Long before dawn I was absolutely certain we had come to the end of our tether, and that the swamp, being impassable, would see the end of us. But in this belief I was wrong—very wrong—for instead of the swamp being the cause of a tragedy it was the Danakils, who unknown to us, had found our trail, followed it with uncanny precision, and had almost surrounded us before we had the faintest suspicion of their presence.

It was only by the merest chance that any of us got clear, for one of the tribesmen, unable to hold himself in check until the cordon was complete, suddenly rose from a clump of reeds, not twenty yards from us, and hurled a spear. I saw the flash of the blade as it whistled past my ear, and heard the thud as it struck one of the camel boys. But before I could raise my rifle the savage had disappeared. One glance at the prostrate form was sufficient. The spear had hit him full in the chest, and the blade was protruding a foot from his back. He was dead before we started on the wild race that was to take us through the ambush.

How we managed to get through I have never been able to understand, for as the camels floundered into mud and water, and struggled out again, the fog seemed full of dull flashes as an occa-

sional ray of diffused sunlight shone on whistling spear-heads. I fired several times at dim, running forms, and on two occasions a scream told me that my bullet had found a resting-place. Ali, bellowing insults at our elusive enemy, loaded and fired my twelve-bore at intervals during that breathless scramble, but with what result I know not; although he afterwards claimed to have killed ten men! At any rate, our showing fight, even though we were on the run, was sufficient to keep the Danakils back for a time and enabled us to get through the cordon nearly surrounding us. I do not believe that any of us remember much of what happened during the rest of that day. Personally I have no recollection of ever leaving the swamps with their eternal pall of fog. All I do remember is the animal I was riding slowing into a walk every now and then, and my swaying drunkenly from side to side with every stride he made.

Three days later the caravan struggled into Hadele Gubo, and safety, but by that time I was unconscious with fever, a fate that had also overtaken two of the camel boys. For days it was touch and go with me, but a strong constitution pulled me through. Unfortunately one of the boys, who had never turned a hair, even in the tightest corner, succumbed. A month later I was strong enough to start the homeward trek, mainly thanks to rough, but kindly nursing by the women of the Aussa tribe, to whose village we had been carried.

By easy stages, following a route which avoided the inhospitable desert of the Danakils, Ali, my personal boy, the two surviving camel boys and myself at length reached Dire Daoua; much to the surprise of my taciturn hotel-keeper, who had given up all hope of seeing us again, and was preparing to send my belongings home!

And what, you will ask, of the mystery of the Hawash? What of the subterranean channels and immense caves into which legend says it pours its mighty volume? Does this mystery river end in those terrible, fog-bound marshes which had so nearly claimed us? Quite probably it does, but, so far as I am concerned I discovered nothing that will shed any light on the subject. No explorer can get very far when constantly harassed by blood-thirsty savages; and, much as I should like to see a mystery solved, I am certainly not going there again to satisfy anyone—not even those generations of geographers to whom I referred at the beginning of this narrative. If they would solve the mystery let them do so themselves. I shall not be one of the party!



## INTO THE MELTING-POT.

A FANTASY.

BY JOHN HORNE.

A WATCH-CHAIN came tumbling into the box marked 18, which was the first of three placed beneath the gold-broker's counter. The others were labelled 15 and 9, and have little concern with this story. The watch-chain was thick, with links so cunningly interwelded that he quivered for some moments after he had come to rest. He was very proud of his quivering. It showed good workmanship, and he looked around anxiously to see if it had been appreciated by the trinkets that already filled the bottom of the box. They made a strange assortment, these bits and pieces of former glory, for it was the height of the rush to part with gold, and because men had decided to pay a high price for the metal, sentiment must also go into the melting-pot. It was better to forget the secrets one was parting with, and better still never to have known them. But the trinkets knew and remembered, and had the clerks in the gold-broker's office listened . . . but gold was supposed to be silent, and besides, they were far too busy with their scales and ready reckoners and their bottles of acid to pay attention to what happened under the counter. As a matter of fact, in the eighteen box the buzz of conversation was almost deafening. Things were greeting old acquaintances, reviving memories of other days, criticising, quarrelling, laughing in every European language; and through the din one could even catch the purring tones of the East, emitted by strangely shaped creatures with either too many arms or too many heads that rather shocked the watch-chain. He had been British for nearly a hundred years, and Britons of his time did not appreciate Eastern art. It was a comfort to know that one's neighbours were at least eighteen carat. What must it be like among the nines, or even the fifteens? He shuddered, and was trying to find a more comfortable position for the link which still throbbled from the acid test, when a voice beside him rose shrilly.

'Dieu! Ce que tu prends de la place! Tu m'écrases,' it protested.

The watch-chain twisted himself in the direction of the sound. His French was passable, but he regarded the language with suspicion. One never knew to what impropriety the simplest phrase might lead, especially when the speaker was the statuette of a beautiful and completely nude woman, standing upon a round plinth with a coat of arms engraved on its under side—a seal evidently. So he replied with caution, 'Je regrette, Madame.'

'You are pardoned,' she said in broken English. 'Do not regret anything. Regrets are useless, especially for us. I was wrong to complain. Many men have crushed me as I closed their letters, and through their fingers I have felt the transports of love, the quiver of desire, the cold trembling of fear, but regret—no. If that came after, they never showed it.'

The watch-chain could think of no answer to such a speech, but a dissipated-looking cigarette-case, against which the French seal had been leaning, found it a good opportunity to join in the conversation.

'There will be crushing enough when we get into the mould,' he remarked with a grin, 'and I shan't be sorry if Mademoiselle is next to me.'

'*Merci*, Monsieur, for the compliment,' she laughed, with her eyes still on the watch-chain. 'When our friend here has recovered from the shock of seeing me, no doubt he also will say something gallant. *Ah, Grand Dieu . . . encore !*'

A Scotch snuff-box lying immediately beneath her, had stirred, rolling her over on her side. 'Your conversation is fair disgraceful,' he grunted. 'No wonder a body can't keep still, with a shameless hussy going on like that on the top of him ! But ye were speaking of regrets. Till this day I regretted nothing so much as the years I spent in a drawer, with nothing but the family Bible for company. None better, ye would think, but it was in Aberdeen, and the signatures on the fly-leaf were for ever bickering at each other about jointures and legacies till I couldn't get a word in edgeways—a fair affliction. Well, now I'm glad I went through it.'

'Why ? Did they give you sixpence ?' enquired the cigarette-case flippantly.

'Man,' said the snuff-box, ignoring his clumsy wit, 'where are ye'r brains ? Do ye not know that our value has increased by near forty per cent ? Let them crush away. I don't care who I'm next to.'

'What rudeness and what logic !' exclaimed the French seal. 'We are worth more, and according to Monsieur that is all that

matters. But as for me, my value is not alone in the metal. To the man for whom I was made I represented his great love, the shrine at which he worshipped. Money cannot buy that.'

'Tuts fiddlesticks!' retorted the snuff-box, and he was about to add a few scathing remarks about the seal's amorous past, when a commotion at the other end of the box distracted everyone's attention. Ever since their arrival the Eastern creatures had been chanting with monotonous insistence. It went something like this, 'Rama Sami Bramah Putra, Rama Sami Bramah Putra,' and though their eyes remained glazed and sightless, their numerous heads and hands had begun to move ever so slightly to the rhythm. A faint thud of drums seemed to mingle with the chant, and the odour of incense that rose from their corner had driven a rather bedraggled lipstick-holder to noisy tears.

'Can't somebody stop these damned niggers?' she sobbed, pushing up her shiny red nose. 'Their row and their smell make me feel like nothing on earth.' She was a common little thing, and had lost her cap in the crowd, but her language amused a pocket compass whose dial had been fixed upon her ever since her arrival. She was pretty in a coarse sort of way, and he hadn't travelled with the third officer of a tramp steamer for nothing.

'Stop them?' he chuckled. 'You may as well save your breath. That's prayers, and if they repeat it often enough before we go into the pot, they'll have a grand time on the other side. Gosh! But it brings back the East—when there's a show on in the temples.'

'Well, I call it a foul noise,' she complained, 'though you do explain it nicely. Are they Rajahs? I'd love to go to the East. Night clubs are no good—nothing but drink and dope—I've tried them all. I wish I could marry a Rajah—a rich one.'

'They're all rich,' said the compass, 'though I don't know that you'd like it when—well—when they got you out there.'

A thin hard voice behind him laughed mockingly. 'Of course you don't,' it squeaked. 'What can a mere sailor man know of Rajahs? Now, I lived with one, and look at me—a wreck!'

For a moment there was silence, even the Eastern creatures having ceased their chant. All watched the speaker, who, to tell the truth, at first sight hardly seemed worth the trouble, being nothing more than the very dented lid of a box, covered with small cavities that looked as if they had once held something. In the centre of the lid was an oval hole.

'Yes,' the voice went on, gratified by the interest it had aroused, 'I lived with a Rajah for months—or it might have been years. I can't remember, it was so terrible.'

The French seal sighed. '*Pauvre petite!* Tell us . . . everything.'

'We were six little boxes, rather like the Scotch gentleman there, but studded with diamonds, and when you pressed a button, a door in our middles opened and a tiny bird popped up and sang and disappeared again. The Rajah bought us for the ladies of his palace in India.'

'Some Rajah!' giggled the lipstick, 'I wish I'd met him.'

Her remark made the Scotch snuff-box furious. 'Woman!' he growled, 'do ye not know your Kipling? East is East and West is West, and never the twain . . .'

'Kipling's India is out of date,' interrupted the lid. 'This Rajah had a European wife, but she remained in Paris, and he did not buy her boxes with jewelled singing birds. In India it was different. There he had his favourites, skilled to lure him back when he tired of Western women. The most beautiful of these was called Tangatche, whom he loved and wished to make also his wife, but she had only given him a girl child which was looked upon as a disgrace for her. Now, when the Rajah brought us from Europe, Tangatche was about to have another child, and she wept continually and made offerings in the temples. Every evening the Rajah would play with us, and sometimes Tangatche was with him, but still she wept while the birds were singing.'

"Why do you weep, Tangatche?" he asked one night when it was very still and hot. "It is not good to weep."

"Because I dare not ask what is in my heart," she replied.

"Speak, Tangatche."

"My time is near. If only I were the wife of my lord, my child would be a son for the honour of my lord, and I would laugh and be happy. Shiva has told me this, and Shiva does not lie."

'The Rajah thought for a long time. "It is good," he said at last. "The wedding shall be prepared. Take this box. The bird will distract your thoughts, and if the child is a boy, another box with a more beautiful song shall be yours. But if Shiva has lied, beware of my anger." And he gave her one of the boxes, not me, but another.'

'Tangatche paid no heed to the warning in his words, but played with the little bird and kissed its jewelled beak as it sang. Soon

after the wedding her child came, and it was a girl. There was secret rejoicing among the other women, because Tangatche had been preferred before them, and they knew what must happen when the Rajah was told. He gave no sign of anger, but went to the table where we lay and took me in his hand. Thrice he made my little bird sing, and thrice he dipped its beak in a phial which he took from his pocket. Then he wrote some words on a paper, and bade a slave carry all to Tangatche. She lay weeping, but when she had read the letter her tears ceased, for it was written thus : " Kiss the bird while it sings, Tangatche, for its song is more beautiful than all the others. Let your child's lips kiss it. Be happy—and forget."

" He has forgiven," she cried. " My lord has forgiven . . . "

' Oh, the horror of it ! How I wished that my spring would snap, that the jewelled doors would fail to open ! Oh, the agony of that song, while Tangatche held her baby's lips to the poisoned beak ! " Kiss—be happy—forget," she murmured, and then turned the bird to her own mouth, revelling in its shrill twitter of death. . .

' Afterwards the other women snatched me from the bed and tore out my jewels. They fought for them like wild cats, and threw away what remained—the wreck of my beauty. I remember nothing of how I got back to England, but I'm glad to end up here, and not among the Rajahs this young lady wants so much.'

The lipstick burst into hysterical tears. ' You've frightened me, you have really. What an awful story ! I thought the East was all love and moonlight and marble fountains—like in the pictures.'

' Love ! ' the French seal whispered to the watch-chain. ' How can the poor thing know its meaning ? Still—they say that every life holds love . . . once . . . but one must grasp it quickly or it escapes. Have you found it so, *mon ami* ? '

The watch-chain did not reply at once. The story of his own life was passing before him, the story of the love he had grasped and allowed to escape, the memory he had cherished in silence all these years. He longed to unburden his heart before the end. He glanced at the French seal. What did it matter that she was nude ? She had loved. She would understand.

' Their talk has brought things back,' he said at last. ' That wretched little lipstick with her drink and dope—though probably it isn't her fault—the East with its glamour and tragedy. . . I've tried all that, in order to forget. But why should I bore you with my affairs ? '

'If she were here you would tell her, would you not?'

'How well you read my thoughts. If only I could see her once more . . . It would mean so much . . .'

'Was she very beautiful?'

'The loveliest thing on earth, a bracelet with each link a master-piece of curve, and among them five emeralds set in golden claws. We used to compare our links and try to follow their twining, but I always got lost in hers—I think I wanted to. We met at a great house in the country, among the gayest throng you could imagine, and before a day had passed I knew that I loved her. Very soon it was plain that she too was not indifferent, and the world seemed a very happy place till someone came to work havoc between us. You see, we were both very young and headstrong and proud, and when one is all that it is easy to be deceived. In a weak moment I was caught off my guard by a scheming creature who knew how to play her cards. I suppose she was jealous, but I didn't understand the world then. Anyhow . . .'

Sounds of dispute from the counter above made him break off. An indignant woman's voice rose in protest. 'Only two pounds—for a heavy piece like that? Why, it belonged to my grandmother. It must be worth more.'

'I'm afraid that is all we can give,' said the broker's clerk. 'The weight is in the glass, and the gold is very thin. Perhaps you would like to try somewhere else. . . .'

The woman's voice took a tone of hurt submission. 'Oh, well, if it's your best price . . . but I call it disgraceful . . . for a real antique, too!'

A thrill of anticipation went through the eighteen box. What could be causing such a fluster? Two pounds was nothing of a price, so it must be something specially romantic or adventurous, or even scandalous, but in any case with a tale to tell. The nearness of the melting-pot made things wonderfully ready to lay bare their pasts, and the grandmother's experiences would surely be worth listening to. Only the Scotch snuff-box seemed doubtful.

'Antique indeed!' he snapped. 'More likely some tuppenny-hapenny Victorian trash, spread out as thin as paper. Ye've got to be Georgian like me to be a real antique. That was the time! Well I mind lying in the flowered-silk waistcoat pockets wi' a heap o' guineas clinking against me, and the grand way they would bring me out for a pinch—aye, and spill the most of it on their jabots if they'd had their port.'



The lipstick began whimpering again. 'A pinch of what? Was it cocaine? I've tried that, and the coming back's awful. Oh dear! I've no past—only Le Touquet in a suit-case with a lot of plated stuff. My lady took me to the Casino every evening in her bag crammed with French notes. The smell of them was terrible, but they didn't last long the way she threw them about. At first somebody kept giving her more, but in the end even he dried up and they had an awful row about it. We came away without paying the bill—no luggage or anything—and this morning she cried and cried, and did up her lips and brought me here. Oh dear! I wish I could find my cap. I can't go into the mould without a cap.'

'Never mind,' said the compass gallantly, 'I'll look after you.'

'Will you? Oh, I do like a sailor . . . oh . . . oh!'

A big oval locket had fallen into the box, knocking everything right and left and completely burying the lipstick. Thrown open by the impact the locket stood upright, wedged tightly between the compass and the French seal, like a monster yellow gnat whose wings have got stuck. One side of her revealed the portrait of a girl, a brunette with a rather long nose, and a mouth (of the kind once known as 'rosebud') that smiled invitingly. Her brown eyes gazed with demure coyness from under a tiny pork-pie hat, perched perilously in front of a mountain of hair. Opposite her a young man, side-whiskered and moustached, stared vacantly at the temptations facing him, and round each a painted wreath of minute flowers twined in curls and spirals.

There was a general twisting and straining to get a sight of the new arrival: only the Eastern creatures continued their prayers, because they regretted having listened to the story of Tangatche and were trying to make up for lost time. 'Rama Sami Bramah Putra,' they chanted, but the locket took no notice of them.

'What a bump!' she panted. 'Most unbecoming, I declare.'

'Ye mean a dunt,' muttered the Scotch snuff-box. '1850—and not a day earlier—I thought as much.'

The locket stopped panting to examine him more closely. 'How dare you insult a lady like that! But after the insults I've been subjected to up there, it doesn't matter what *you* say. They actually had the impertinence to doubt my carat—wanted to put me in the box with the nines—me, the reigning beauty of my period! However, all's well that ends well, as dear Shakespeare says, and I only hope I shall find a *gentleman* more amiable than you to talk to.'

'I notice ye can talk,' he retorted, 'but if it's compliments ye're wanting, ye needn't come to me.'

'Of course I want compliments. All my life men have said nice things to me, even James, though one doesn't take much notice of a husband's compliments.'

The snuff-box glared at the portrait of the young man. 'I suppose that's James. He looks fool enough for anything,' he said acidly.

The locket bridled,<sup>1</sup> and was meditating a reply that would put this rude Scotchman in his place, when her gaze lit upon the watch-chain and the French seal.

'Arthur!' she exclaimed. 'Of all the strange coincidences! Oh . . . it makes me feel quite faint. . . .'

The watch-chain said nothing. The coincidence was certainly strange, and—for him—far from pleasant. He remembered another occasion when the locket had fainted, and now her presence added to the bitterness of memory.

'Arthur!' she went on, watching him as a cat watches a mouse, 'don't say you've forgotten me. Have I changed, Arthur?'

'You don't seem to have changed,' he said. 'I hoped you were out of my life for ever, after the harm you did me, but you've come back . . .'

' . . . To find you in—well—charming company, *quite* different from the last time we met—that wretched bracelet with her vulgar emeralds and her bourgeoisie sincerity. I congratulate you, Arthur, but where have you been all these years?'

'Does it matter where I've been? Because of you I lost my only love. You wrecked both our lives for no better reason than jealousy and the pleasure of hurting those who stood in your way.'

'Don't be tragic, Arthur. Have you forgotten that night in the conservatory? Was it my fault that you kissed me when I fainted in your arms?'

'He should hae skelped ye,' broke in the snuff-box. 'It would hae brought ye to ye'r senses quicker than kissing.'

'What's skelping?'

'Woman, your ignorance is awful. Did ye never hear of "The wee Cooper o' Fife—nickety nackety noo noo noo"? But I suppose James was'na capable of it.'

'I don't know what on earth you are talking about, though

<sup>1</sup> A complicated action, described in the dictionary as 'Throwing up head and drawing in chin to express offence.' The locket did it perfectly.

I'm sure it's horrid. Well, Arthur, you did kiss me, didn't you ?'

'Yes, I kissed you,' he replied. 'You managed that all right, as you managed that *she* should come in at that very moment. You won, and parted us for ever.'

The French seal was looking at the locket with utter contempt. 'A victory that does you no honour, Madame,' she remarked, 'unless you were in love with Monsieur.'

'In love! You foreigners are so funny about love—and so indecent. I suppose I was in love with James, anyhow I had made up my mind to marry him. But why shouldn't I amuse myself to spite a worthless chit who thought her charms greater than mine? If you want to lay down the law, you had better put some clothes on.'

'Madame, my nudity needs no apology. You may be clothed, but you have no heart.'

'Continental baggage!'

At the prospect of a feminine duel the eighteen box fairly seethed with excitement. All the trinkets took sides, some for, some against the locket, except the lipstick, who had been completely buried and could only sob feebly, and the Eastern creatures, whose chant was growing ever louder and more hurried.

'I'd kiss her all right, in a conservatory or anywhere else,' roared the compass with nautical ardour. 'She's a real beauty,' which opinion made the dented lid crack with rage.

'A harpy, you mean,' piped her thin falsetto. 'I've seen her kind. When I was living with the Rajah there was . . .'

'Oh, shut up with your Indian sob stuff,' drawled the cigarette-case, who had been ogling the French seal without success. 'I agree with the compass. Very attractive—er—wonderful appeal. If I can get next *her* in the mould, that Venus can have her fat watch-chain and welcome.'

With such gallant speeches rising above the din, the locket had regained her composure. 'You see, Arthur,' she said, smiling sweetly at her admirers, 'I create a furore in spite of the unladylike behaviour of your, we'll hope, chance acquaintance. Forget that silly bracelet and let us be friends. We could make the future amusing, you and I.'

'There is no future for me,' he replied. 'You've ruined that, as you ruined the past. My bracelet is all I care for in the world—if only I could see her once again—if only I knew where to find her.'

The locket still smiled, but it was a smile of pitiless revenge. 'See her again?' she hissed. 'You'll never see her again, though she was up there on the counter only a moment ago.'

'But . . . then she must come . . .'

'Not she! They put her in the nines, the silly simpering thing with her airs and graces, in the nines *where she belongs*. Ha, ha, your *adorata* was only nine carat, and if you hadn't been a blind fool you would have noticed it long ago. An impostor, that's what she was, so you may spare your tears. *Now* do you regret kissing me in the conservatory?'

'Nine carat! It isn't true—it can't be true. . . .'

'I tell you I saw her go, the hussy! Ah, you needed a lesson, Arthur, but now she is out of the way for good—and I remain . . .'

Her words trailed into silence, drowned by a booming human voice from overhead. 'That's the lot, Bill. Put on the lids, and we'll get the boxes away. Hullo! Who chucked this in here?'

'Oh, that,' Bill's voice answered. 'Sorry—my mistake.'

'You're always making mistakes. It belongs to the eighteens, that does. Now, what did you mix it up with?'

'Blowed if I know. Oh, yes—that dame just now with her granny's precious antique—the blinking gadget was nine—must have got into the wrong box.'

'Well, hoick it out.'

Nothing could have been more extraordinary than the effect of this conversation upon the locket. Self-assurance had given way to doubt, doubt to abject fear, and she wilted and shook frantically in a vain endeavour to make herself less conspicuous.

'It's a lie,' she screamed, 'a horrible lie. Oh, please hide me. Can't one of you gentlemen pull me over?'

'Who's an impostor now?' squeaked the dented lid.

'Chuck her out,' wailed the lipstick.

'Rama Sami Bramah Putra,' chanted the Eastern creatures, while the French seal whispered to the watch-chain, '*Vous voyez, mon ami, la méchanceté se paye enfin*. I am glad for you.'

The cigarette-case and the compass looked at one another in dismay. No doubt the locket would have been good company in the melting-pot, but nine carat, the thought of such a misalliance was enough to make the bravest hesitate. The Scotch snuff-box chuckled at their quandary. 'If ye want my opinion,' he began, clearing his throat, but got no further, for at that moment two hands appeared over the eighteen box. One seized the locket and

carried it out of sight, the other dropped a bracelet, which came to rest beside the watch-chain. The bracelet was mellowed by age, somewhat thin from rubbing, but each link was still a masterpiece of curve, and among them were five golden claws which had once held five emeralds.

'Arthur,' she said in a low melodious voice, 'at last!'

He quivered a little to get closer. 'Darling—after all these years. It was my fault. I should have come back.'

'No, the fault was mine. I heard what *she* said just now, but I had known it long ago. When my anger was over I realised—and then it was too late.'

'We are together now, dearest.'

'Yes, we are together. Nothing else matters.'

A great heave shook the eighteen box from end to end. 'We're going,' sobbed the lipstick. 'Oh, where's my sailor?' And the compass burrowed down beside her.

'It's like an earthquake,' rasped the dented lid. 'When I was with the Rajah there was one that . . .'

'Damn the Rajah!' shouted the cigarette-case. 'Hold on to me.'

'Aye, we're off now,' the snuff-box grunted to the French seal. 'Come away, Madame. Ye'r no so flighty as ye look, and France and Scotland have had much in common.'

'A Queen?' she said, smiling at him.

'Aye, a Queen—and in her end was her beginning. I've been wondering if our end . . .'

'Perhaps,' she said. 'Who knows?'

'Rama Sami Bramah Putra,' gabbled the Eastern creatures incoherently. They had been thrown upside-down, but that made no difference to them, for they could pray in any position. Only the watch-chain and the bracelet said nothing. They nestled against each other and had no need for words.

The lid of the eighteen box closed with a crash. The lock turned.

'Poor old gadgets,' said Bill, putting the key in his pocket. 'Rattle, rattle, rattle—one would almost think they were talking.'

'Talking!' said the other broker's clerk. 'Well, you do have queer ideas.'

## A BROOM AT THE FORE.

BY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR GEORGE MACMUNN,  
K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.S.O.

### I.

#### BULDoo BADMASH.

*'Sweep a path and carpet it with red'*

THE deodars waved in the autumn breeze of the Himalaya, and from the terraced flower-beds came now and again a shriek of delight, as a small head wearing a cardboard helmet and waving a toy sword scrambled among the dahlias and chrysanthemums, and a brown figure dodged before him from one deodar-trunk to another.

On the verandah of the little hill bungalow was an array of lead soldiers, and a cannon or two, by the side of a grey card fort, but the commander of the fortress had apparently sallied out against the dusky foe. In other words, commandant-of-garrison Derek Walden was giving chase to leader-of-savages Buldoo the sweeper's urchin, the which was contrary to all household rules, white or black, British or Indian.

If there was one rule of the household it was this. Derek was not to play with the sweeper's son, and the sweeper's son was not to come up from the terraces below where his father's hovel stood in solitude. But mother was out at bridge, and father was at the Viceroy's, and the establishment were all having a long siesta.

Derek was very partial to the sweeperlet Buldoo, and Buldoo had a penchant for the bungalow's vicinity where he worshipped with a deep worship the white-skinned, red-cheeked, golden-haired Derek.

The illicit afternoon had begun with a full-dress parade of dragoons and guardsmen on the verandah plinth, Buldoo's white teeth and pink lips showing his appreciation and adoration. Then had followed the sortie and merry chase in the woods. No solemn Karim Baksh to chase him away with a whip, and no shrill-voiced ayah to hurl abuse against him and all his relations. Derek was



forbidden to play with any of the servants' children as a matter of order and sanitary precaution, but to play with the *mehtar's* son was not a matter of discipline, it was a matter of sheer anathema. And why? The answer in some sort is one with which the good British public has now a bowing and distant acquaintance since the Gandhi Saga and the Knights of the Round Table. Something has been said of India's sixty million untouchables, of the 9,000 primary schools at which the children of the untouchables must sit outside and learn what they can therefrom.

But among those sixty million untouchables, those descendants of ancient Indian races conquered far away back in the ages by the Aryan immigrants from across the Oxus, there are many levels and gradations. Humblest and most untouchable of them all, almost outside the pale of any Eastern's human sympathy are the sweepers and scavengers. From what aboriginal or conquered origins or by what other means of social depression and slavery they have sprung, history and even tradition is silent. Tradition, in fact, would not condescend to such unmentionables. So they remain, a strange layer of humanity, living if not in service, on carrion and oddments, on lizards, and all the impure beasts of the jungle, the sewer and the gutter.

But in the villages, in the cities and in the European households, they are in request as salaried menials. By that likeable habit of euphemy which the East uses to cover its contempts, the sweeper is known by the title of *Mehtar* or prince, just as the humble, but not so humble, water carrier is called the *Bhistie*, the 'man of paradise,' and the gentle tailor '*the Khalifa*,' or 'successor' to the Prophet, the Caliph.

The Prince therefore is a familiar presence at the gate of every sahib's bungalow and outhouse, neatly attired with his broom of office, the long hand-broom, so that the British speak of him as 'Plantagenet,' and the 'Knight of the broom,' and yet in a country where all conservancy is by hand, he is the most indispensable. Yet, humble and outcaste though he be, he is little subject to the daily ills of the East compared with other servants, perhaps because he lives largely on a *réchauffé* of the succulent and nourishing scraps from the European's table, flung into his pathetic platter which he always places humbly outside the dining-room door.

This outcaste fraternity is a large one with many laws and customs within itself, and is at times ministered to in such aping

of religion as may be permitted to it, by outcaste renegade priests of higher orders, in fact it is a life of which the curious might deduce a strange story where many of the earliest rites of primitive races have a queer and syncopated survival.

To this day too I remember a château in France's Headquarters of the Indian Corps d'Armée, with the long sweep of its drive swept in meticulous patterns by a 'knight of the broom,' quartered in a deserted gardener's lodge. Once too there died, as I was also privileged to tell, a sweeper invalided from France, in a hospital near the New Forest. Most sweepers' bodies were burnt, but this one, said his peers, must be buried. The Imaam at Woking who buried all good Moslems refused to handle or admit the corpse and an English vicar came to the healing of one who died for England, and he was buried under the church wall in a Hampshire churchyard hard by the tomb of a true Plantagenet, the most remarkable story of a world upheaval, and a tribute to right thinking on the part of the vicar.

Of such then was little Buldoo, brown and merry imp of sturdy well-moulded limbs, grown on soup and stew from the swill tub of the big house and the better therefore, lively as a grig and happy as the day was long, with little thought for the strange mould of life into which his body and soul had been poured. Thrice glad was he when the rules could be broken and he could romp and play soldiers with the other little grig of the white skin and the golden hair, whom he usually had to worship afar.

Just as the *chasse-aux-chrysanthèmes* were in full swing, the gardener arrived in fury, and the head servant, Karim Baksh, appeared from his siesta, hurriedly putting his pugaree straight and gripping his master's hunting-crop. Buldoo was going to be chased home and Derek was to be captured and got ready for tea with the *mem-sahib*. The day's fun was over, and before long Derek *Sahib*, the *chota sahib* or young master, who reigned in all hearts, but especially in those of Indra Singh, the mate of the rickshaw-crew and four stout Garhwali lads, was switched off to the *Willayat* of myth and wonder where golden-haired lads are turned into young masters and return to be met enthusiastically by old masters' old retainers.

The Garhwali crew were not forbidden as associates, being men of Rajput origin themselves, and often formed squads for Derek to drill, and actually paraded in line to salute him in the little hill railway train, as he went to *Willayat*. But before he

went he managed to convey to Buldoo his old sword and a box of rather broken life-guardsmen, to be buried and much treasured.

## II.

## PLANTAGENET.

So the *chota sahib*, the golden-haired Derek, passed away to the mysterious *Willayat* and school, and Buldoo's parents sought a new master, while the brown little imp who was darkening and blackening as he grew, cherished the life-guardsmen, but broke and lost his sword.

As time rolled on he too became a 'knight of the broom,' and because he remembered his memory of his father's soldier masters, became sweeper in the lines of an Indian regiment, *Hala-khor* sweeper, or night-soil removalist. It was not an inspiring rôle, but Buldoo was now a well-shaped lad, who walked, for all the broom on his arm, with an athlete's tread, and wrestled with other sweeper lads in the dust or the mud outside the regimental lines. Sometimes as sweepers must, he dimly reflected on the why and the wherefore, and sometimes on a memory of the golden lad with whom he had romped and shrieked when authority was napping, and he spent many a spare hour watching the recruit soldiers drill, and swept the ground in front of the quarter-guard with meticulous care.

He had a friend among sweepers, a lad who swept in the barracks of the British battalion in the same cantonment, and the friend had said to him, 'Why do you stay among those black soldiers? Come with me and serve the white men. There is heaps of their food about, and they give you tobacco, and life is jolly.'

So Buldoo who knew well enough that not for one instant in the lines of the Indian Regiment could he overstep the ruthless hardfast line below which the outcaste lived, agreed that he too would go and see life with the *gora log*, the 'white-folk.' Like all sweepers, *meghs* and other outcastes he knew his landmarks well enough, and what horrible penalties came in the night to those who dared presume. He had accepted it without thought, but the vision of the ways of the British soldier who understood not and cared little for such things was entrancing. To the barracks he went after having paid one rupee earnest money and licence to the jemadar sweeper, and was duly produced before the quarter-

master of the regiment and entertained as 'barrack-sweeper No. fifty.'

Life in the sweepers' lines, better tenements than with the Rajput Regiment he had just left, was good enough. He had a gorgeous green waistcoat which his friend lent him and a great pink pugaree tied in outrageous jaunting fashion, when he went down to the bazaar on an off day, so much so that the little gipsy girls who came to town with their gaudy skirts, and neatly bound bosoms, thought him a very fine lad indeed. Buldoo's heart was drawn to the barrack children who reminded him of the *chota sahib*, and for them he would bring paper toys from the bazaar, and clay horses at the Dewali, and let off fireworks. Thus he became a licensed player in the Parcherries<sup>1</sup> and the wives of the regiment gave him food and oddments and knew him as 'Banshoot,' a term of endearment in use in the East.

Buldoo was no fool in the state of life to which he had been called, and he studied life around him. The ways of the Rajput soldiery who curled their beards and moustaches and cursed him if he came too near, he had followed acutely, learning how they cooked their food apart and how they muttered mantras and charms on occasion. He even had copied their swaggering lilt, which he would use when he went to the bazaar, and once a gipsy girl had called to him '*Aye Sipahi*' ('Oh! soldier!') and indeed when he stripped to wrestle with the other lad of the broom, his lithe frame was as good as any young Rajput's, and save for a coarse joint of nostril to face was almost Aryan of countenance. If you knew that he was a sweeper and could never escape that lot and fate in India, you would sigh, for one who seemed built by nature for a fair race in life, and perhaps wonder at the hard ways of the world, especially the Eastern world.

Once after he had left the Rajput lines, swaggering off to the bazaar and to see if the girl who had called him *Sipahi* was about, he ran into a soldier of the Indian Regiment who recognised him. Buldoo cringed and salaamed.

'Oho, *Bhangi*,<sup>2</sup> who told you to tie your pugaree like a Rajput, hey?'

Buldoo looked round, cringed again, joined his hands and held them up to the twice-born in respect, supplication and humiliation.

'Look at your waistcoat,' cried the soldier. 'And your py-jamas! They are tighter than a courtesan's and look like a sol-

<sup>1</sup> The European married quarters.

<sup>2</sup> Sweeper.

dier's. 'I'll teach you, you swine, you dog-eater, I'll teach you to ape your betters,' and he knocked his pugaree off.

For a moment Buldoo saw red, and made as if to fly at his reviler. Then the ancient fear came on and he could only grovel. The Rajput felt better.

'Don't let me catch you doing it again, *bhangî*, or I'll hammer the life out of you,' and off he swaggered.

Buldoo sat by the side of the road, and after a while recovered himself. Perhaps some spark of the ancient race before the Aryan dominion came to him. He got up, dusted himself, picked up his pugaree, tied it meticulously and as if in derision, tied it with the Rajput tilt and knot, and then set off, but not in the same direction. He made his way back to barracks. On the steps of the wall near No. 1 block a soldier whom he knew was sitting cleaning his rifle.

Buldoo salaamed.

'Ullo Jerry, where you been? a-larking down in that bazaar. 'Ere just 'old this,' and he gave Buldoo the butt of his rifle while he hauled a tight pull-through up the barrel.

When this was over Buldoo stood to attention, shouldered the rifle at the short shoulder and brought his hand over in salute.

'No,' said his friend, 'that ain't right. See here!'

He took the rifle and showed the sweeper the proper way. Then he thought it would amuse him to try and put him through the manual. For an hour Buldoo eagerly learnt, and that was the beginning of a friendship between Buldoo, line sweeper to His Majesty's —th, and Private Albert Jenks, formerly municipal sweeper in Stepney. Because Jenks was a soldier at heart he liked a pupil, and Buldoo became expert at handling his rifle and was even taken down to the miniature range and was allowed to fire a round on pretence of cleansing the marker's butt. At last came a day when he was allowed to fire some service rounds poached by Jenks, and used after the musketry party had gone back to barracks on the real range beyond the golf links.

Thus ex-sweeper Jenks of Stepney, gamecock and full-fledged foot-soldier, and sweeper Buldoo of Bhangi Lane, Ambala, hereditary poltroon and outcaste, became sworn friends. Little recked Jenks of hereditary untouchability, and exploited the friendship for all it was worth. Fortunately Jenks had no fancy for the country liquor that has often been the bane of the British rank and file, but a skirt was another matter. Buldoo would introduce his

friends of the gipsy and criminal tribes to Jenks, who was not perhaps the worse for a chat out in the thorn thickets with some of these saucy wenches in the yellow and red petticoats and jinky silver bangles, disreputable baggages though they were with their rounded arms and busts and glorious white teeth.

But the best of days came to an end, and one day came the tidings of the Great War over the seas. Jenks was now all a soldier, and talked by the hour together of what the British Army would do. Buldoo and the yellow skirts listened all agog, and news came that battalion after battalion, European and Indian, was off to *Willayat*. But Jenks's corps was excluded and then one day came an order too, that sent it off to some destination overseas unknown. The number of sweepers to go with the corps was much reduced and Buldoo, to his dismay, was left behind, and taken on by the Barrack Department to keep the barracks swept and garnished. It was not very long before new Europeans came from Europe, so new and so green and so polite, much more so than the regular British soldier. Buldoo soon found himself installed as guide, philosopher, and friend to many of the newcomers to whom he would show the bazaars and the country road, and talk the English that he had picked up from Jerry. Many were the little tips that came his way, but his heart would not rest in peace and plenty. The war was calling him, and as he could not get discharged he made off and walked the country-side to another station a hundred miles away.

Here was a great recruiting dépôt for Indian troops, and for a while he had ideas of shipping as a soldier, as the bazaars said that the *sahibs* were enlisting all and sundry. So he swaggered up one day with the Rajput knot in his pugaree to offer himself for enlistment. The sight of the high-caste soldiery, Rajput and Moslem, however, was too much for him, and his heart went down to his boots, and he slunk into a latrine to re-tie his pugaree and look like a sweeper again. Not for him the bubble reputation, though he did understand a Mark V Service Rifle and all its ways.

Once, however, he took a Moslem sepoy's rifle on sentry-go for an hour, for half a rupee, swearing in the dark that he was a Moslem too, and a reservist, putting on a great coat and tying his pugaree accordingly. He even in the dark had the courage to challenge someone who had approached his post, in the way that Jenks had taught him. It was only another sweeper and nothing to swagger about, but it amused him to treat his brother knight



in a lofty manner. That was the sum of his military experience, and the memory of the *chota sahib* and 'shabash Buldoo' in a piping voice made his heart ache to be a true and proper soldier and not an outcaste sweeper.

## III.

## THE BUBBLE REPUTATION.

*'En avant les enfants perdus'*

Then one day came to Buldoo the first step on a military adventure. Someone said in the bazaar that the *Sirkar* was enlisting sweepers for Mesopotamia. Buldoo had had vague stories of the War in the holy places of Islam. It was there that he would go, and before long he found himself with a numbered tin disc on a cord round his neck, on the great Black Water, the *Kala Pani*, on his way up the Persian Gulf to the Shatt El Arab, and the town of Bussorah which men now call Basra. Indeed, was it a strange place for a little outcaste lad to find himself, and so Buldoo thought in a misty way. But sleeping was dry and food was there in plenty as too many folk could not eat their rations while hearty Buldoo could, and one day as he wandered about the ship, whom should he find on the British Soldiers' deck, but his old friend Jenks, wounded on the first advance to Kut, and now on his way back to the force on the Tigris. It was a happy reunion, and before long Jenks had Buldoo at the manual again.

'Yer never know, Jerry, in this blooming country when yer won't 'ave to fight for yer life with them thieving *Harabs* all over the shop.'

Many a yarn did the wide-eyed Buldoo listen to and then the great steamer came to the bar at the river's mouth and everyone was bundled out into a ferry-boat, for the larger transports could not cross the bar. For twelve hours did the crowded ferry-boat steam up the muddy waters of the Shatt through groves of green palm-trees, and presently the palms were hung with festoons of grapes, and everyone felt that Mesopotamia did not look too bad. What a sight met their eyes as they entered the crowded river and port of Basra, ocean steamers everywhere unloading, river steamers, barges empty and full coming downstream and starting up, such a sight as Sindbad the Sailor never dreamed of for his ancestral Bussorah.

Soon the steamer warped in alongside, and Buldoo and all the drafts were hurried off and collected on the newly made quays . . . quays which a few months earlier were swamps and irrigated date gardens. The drafts had little time to think or look around them. All that Buldoo was aware of was that a ship near by was being unloaded by a host of tall black men who were struck by the overseers every time they passed like ants with a hayseed. And somebody said that they came from Misr or Misraim, and that the Pharaohs of old had always whacked them and that they liked it like that. But Buldoo noticed that the *sahibs* whacked too, but the whack fell on the grain-sack.

Not far from the port was the 'followers' depôt, where all the non-combatant men were posted, most of them the menials for the service of the troops, sweepers, bhisties, and also hosts of cooks, these latter men of better class. Cheery, hearty discipline prevailed in the camp, and those who did not know the trade they professed were soon taught it. Very thorough was the commandant of the depôt. Many men had come out as cooks who knew nothing except how to prepare their own meals, and Buldoo watched them taught mass cooking, and how to use oil cookers. In a country where there was no wood but plenty of oil, oil cooking was wise, even he understood that. What pleased him most was to see the final lessons, when the men were made to cook in trenches representing the front line under the fire of bursting bombs. He laughed to see the cooks cower and scuttle and then get used to it. One day he went for temporary duty as extra sweeper to the British Base Hospital, and here his Umbala experience stood him in stead. All the *gora log*, the white soldiers, were his friends, and he heard many tales of real fighting, in which his friends had invariably bayoneted Turks. Buldoo felt he should like to do that, especially if as one of his friends said, it was a matter of 'prodding them in the rump.'

There was lots doing up at the front some hundreds of miles yet, and soon Buldoo found himself on a barge, one of two on each side of a steamer chunking up the river lying lazy listening to the chant of the chainmen. It was fun too, for they passed great Arab boatmen towing their sailing boats when the wind was against them. They towed starko, which shocked the Indian soldiers on board, who pelted them with potatoes, and Buldoo also laughed at this, but the Arabs who like potatoes laughed too.

At one place where the steamer stopped, was an outpost work

protecting the narrows, and there Buldoo saw a Garhwali whom he was sure he knew. It was Indra Singh, one of the crew of the ricksha of *chota sahib's* mother at Simla long ago. He salaamed low and asked him, and said how he was the sweeper's son, and did Indra Singh remember, and where was the *chota sahib*.

Indra Singh was graciously pleased to take notice, and say he did remember the sweeper's *badmash* son. Buldoo grinned. He too was looking for the *chota sahib*, he had heard he was up-river, but many *chota sahibs* had been killed. But he, Indra Singh, too, longed to see that *chota sahib* for whom he had a very loving memory, and Buldoo salaamed and passed on.

That night the steamer pulled up by the bank for the night not far from Amara. There was nowhere to go, marsh was all round, and the men were allowed to stroll on the bank. Just as it was dusk, Buldoo came on a prostrate sepoy, weeping quietly. He was but a lad and said he had *bukhar*, 'fever.' Buldoo massaged his aching knees and shin-bones. 'He could not go on,' said the lad, 'he wanted to go back. He had not wanted to enlist, his father had made him.' His father was a wounded soldier and loved the Sirkar and the King, but he, Buldeo Singh, was going to desert. He was not going to the front to be bayoneted by Turks, his mother would not want that.

A sudden brain-wave came to Buldoo. Why should not he, Buldoo, go to the front as Buldeo Singh Rajput, and take over this lad's equipment? No one would know. He could tie a Rajput pugaree. He knew how Rajputs eat. The draft was under a strange Indian officer. He could handle a rifle and fire a cartridge. It did not take long to make the exchange, to change the discs on each other's necks, to put Buldeo Singh into the comfortable loose follower's jacket, and for Buldoo to put on the Rajput uniform. The lad was to go back as a cook sick with fever, and as a steamer with empty barges going down was moored hard by, Buldoo put his dummy on that, giving him his own bedding roll, and taking on the sepoy's. It did not take long and the newly made Rajput went and slept an exciting sleep among his fellows and even dreamed of bayoneting Turks in the rump. No one had told him that that was not the way of the Turk, who liked the prod to be the other way about.

Next morning all was well. No one noticed him, and with the others he took his rifle from the twisted ropestand in the middle of the barge and cleaned it, and that was all he had to do.

Being used to cleaning the belts of the European soldiers at Umbala he soon had his equipment in admirable order. Once an officer called him, and asked his name. With mingled trepidation and pride he had said, 'Buldeo Singh, *Huzoor*.' His whiskers and beard were growing, and these he curled carefully, and it would have taken a very penetrating eye to pierce his disguise.

The steamer had chunked up against the stream past Amara, and its rattling traffic, and past the Shrine-of-Ali-in-the-East, and by nightfall had reached the Shrine-of-Ali-in-the-West. Here they were getting near the front and steamers and barges crowded with wounded passed them, and stories of fierce doings were shouted at them. The British officers on board were parading the details, and chatting encouragingly, and down the wind came the boom of distant guns.

That night they tied up at Sheikh Saad, and next morning ran up a few miles farther where the drafts were disembarked, the followers being ordered back to Sheikh Saad, now becoming the advanced base of the force. There had been desperate fighting, and ahead lay the beleaguered Kut. Buldoo found himself fallen in on the bank, with twenty-five other men of his Rajput Corps, and ordered to ground arms, and help drag off some guns. Hauling on a rope came easily and he exerted himself manfully, earning approval. It was a whirl of excitement, with the blue Persian mountains in the distance, the now near sound of guns and musketry. His battalion was in the trenches facing the Turks, and shouldering their bedding rolls the party marched off. It was not more than a mile's trudge before the party came up to the regimental headquarters. Already Buldoo had seen the *chota sahib*, and just as he was going to speak to him two other *chota sahibs* came up just like him, and Buldoo was confused. Perhaps it wasn't his *chota sahib* after all.

The new-found soldier was to get his dose at once. He was sent up with a havildar and ten others to join a company in the front-line trenches, and the Turks were shelling indiscriminately. A *sahib* was in command just like the other three he had seen, and the new draft were interviewed and their equipment inspected. The *sahib* spoke kindly to Buldoo and asked him about service and his home. Buldoo had flushed with pleasure, in giving his concocted answers, flushed with pride that he was a sepoy and being treated as such. That night the Turks had attacked, and Buldoo had actually shot a man, and had not been seized with fear. His

heart exulted as he repeated to himself, 'I am a *jangi nafar*,'— 'a fighting man.' The corporal by his side had been shot and he, outcaste Buldoo it was, who had gripped the situation, and had given orders to the squad. The *sahib* had said *shabash*; and some distant strain in his blood re-echoed to the phrase.

The commanding officer had come into the trenches, and remarked that Buldoo was a proper enough lad, a *baraba jowan*, and again his heart leapt. He had eaten his food and prepared it like a Rajput. He had dared give water and hand a *chappatti* to a comrade and felt that his bluff held good. That night came orders that if the Turk attacked, and was driven back he was to be followed into his own trenches.

The day had passed quietly enough. Buldoo had slept and eaten most of the day. The men were chaffing and talking quietly, and he had actually gained approval by telling a ribald yarn from Bombay. To his surprise he seemed talking on equal terms, and no one had seemed to look askance. That night just after the moon had gone down over the marshes towards Babylon, a heavy fire of Turkish artillery had broken out. So heavy that the men were disconcerted. The *sahibs* and the *subahdar* had been down the line heartening them when the men on the parapet commenced to fire. Nothing happened, however, but there had been several casualties. Buldoo found himself acting *lance-naik*, and, later, told off as the company commander's orderly. That officer himself was but a lad, just one of those *chota sahibs* who seemed to Buldoo so much alike.

The Turkish artillery grew silent, the rifle-fire stopped as the Rajputs recovered their nerve. The company commander walked along the front-line, with Buldoo *lance-naik* and orderly behind him. He had had time to re-tie his pugaree and give it the most rakish of Rajput twists, with an end sticking out stiff like a plume, and the officer noticed it with approval against the skyline as they climbed out of a deep trench.

The night was bright and clear with a cool wind off the Pusht-i-Koh. Now and again the sky showed bright as one of the bigger guns fired a round, and as the echo died away, Rigel twinkled to Betelgeux in the clear Chaldean night, as it had twinkled to the ancient astronomers, even when Amraphael was king of Babylon and Tidal King of Nations, or chief of tribes, in that same Pusht-i-Koh across the way.

Suddenly from out the shadow in front of the parapet came

a rush, and a whirl and a burst of bombs. The Turks were on top of the Rajputs ere half the men could spring up again to the firing-step. Crash among them burst the bombs and behind the bombers came the rush of fixed bayonets. Clear on the skyline stood Nafar Mustapha, hurling their projectiles right and left while the men with bayonets opened magazine fire. Half the Rajputs were down and the front-line trench was lost. But 'counter attack at once' was a good rule and the company commander brought out his two reserve platoons. Old Subahdar-Major Nihal Singh came forth roaring and the *sahib* by his side. 'Shabash the King's Own,' 'Shabash Rajput log! Maro! Maro! Soor-neen!' <sup>1</sup>

With levelled bayonets and confused throwing of bombs the Rajputs rushed forth against the Turks who had not time to consolidate and hurled them back once again. Nihal Singh crashed to the ground and as he sprang forward behind the gallant old tyke, the *sahib* too fell with a bullet in the leg. It was Buldoo then who rushed forward shouting 'Shabash Rajput log! Maro! Maro! Shabash!'

The trench was re-taken, but alas the race is not always to the swift. As Buldoo sprang to the top of the parapet to hurl a bomb at the retreating Turk he too must fall, with a bullet-hole in his forehead, and the back blown out of his head. And just before grim Sergeant Death had called to ex-sweeper Buldoo, 'Pile your arms! Pile your arms!' a cry had reached him from the wounded *chota sahib*, a well-remembered cry from the Simla pine, 'Oh Shahbash, Buldeo! Shahbash!'

'I am calling them home—Come Home!  
Come Home!  
Tread light o'er the dead in the valley.'

*The Trumpeter.*

<sup>1</sup> Well done, 'the Rajput strikes the Swinefaces.'



## THE GATE-CRASHERS.

ON evenings of December gloom  
 I planned my garden-show,  
 And made a list of those to whom  
 Admission cards should go :  
 Others might come, if there was room,  
 But some—distinctly, No.

These shall be bidden, these allowed  
 When I'm At Home in May,  
 When with a choice and comely crowd  
 The terraces are gay ;  
 And all the common herd, I vowed,  
 Be warned to stop away.

Vain censorship—this afternoon  
 I saw my tulips' line,  
 I saw and welcomed *Mrs. Moon*,  
*Flamingo*, *Proserpine*,  
 With *Cottage Maid*, and *Kaiserskroon*,  
 All valued friends of mine.

But picture to yourself the shock  
 When I perceived a mass  
 Of entrants who appeared to mock  
 My veto and my pass,  
 Vulgar intruders of the dock  
 And dandelion class.

Surely ere this they must have seen  
 My patience overtasked ;  
 My views of them have never been  
 Politely veiled or masked,  
 And here they were as thick and green  
 As if they had been asked.

Well-knowing what there was to fear  
 From such persistent pests,  
 I made my invitation clear,  
 I drew up rigorous tests,  
 Yet still the gate-crashers are here,  
 Outnumbering all the guests.

ALFRED COCHRANE.

## CAVIARE FOR THE GENERAL.

BY F. CAMERON SILLAR.

'YES, I brought them together at last. Cæsar had refused to see him in spite of many entreaties. It was a hot, sultry night, I remember, and summer lightning flickered about incessantly. Cæsar lay just outside the city with his legions, having completed the arrangements for his triumph.

'Try that caviare, my dear Lepidus. You'll find it goes excellently well with Falernian.'

'What d'you call it, Lucullus?'

'Caviare. Sturgeon's roe, you know. I have it from Scythia by a courier. An acquired taste, perhaps. To me, exquisite. Do try some. Well, as I was saying, Cæsar had absolutely refused to see him, and his friends, Romans and Gauls alike, were quite disgusted. It was puzzling too. Cæsar's reputation was for mercy and yet here he was determined that the man should suffer the usual fate which all thinking men have for ages considered barbarous.'

'Oh come, Lucullus, whoever heard of a triumph in which the most important prisoner hadn't his throat cut? You get a truculent devil costing us thousands of lives and millions of money and yet in deference to this crazy modern humanitarianism you want to cheat our hungry populace of its legitimate revenge.'

'My dear Catulus, everyone knows you are a fire-eater, so I shan't argue with you. To continue, quite a number of people—well-known people—had pleaded with Cæsar to break an unsportsmanlike tradition and set the gallant Vercingetorix free. But Cæsar turned a deaf ear to all intercessions and we understood at last that the wretched Gaul would go the way of countless distinguished prisoners over the Tarpeian Rock while Cæsar offered sacrifices on the Capitoline above.

'D'you remember that taking little thing, Eunoe, in my Tusculan villa, Lepidus? Well, she was an Arvernian from Gergovia, like Vercingetorix himself and from the moment she heard of Cæsar's refusal, I got no peace nor anything else, until I had promised to ask Cæsar to dinner to meet her.

'A good deal to my surprise he accepted, but as he only let me know at the last minute I hardly had the time to arrange much more than a snack. I forget what I gave him. Oysters, I think, then thrushes, some asparagus, a fat pullet, truffles, a sweet, a savoury and dessert. Cæsar was most charming and I could see that he was captivated by the fair Eunoe.

'Phocos, I wish you'd send down for another amphora of Opimian.'

'Where did you get that Opimian, Lucullus?'

'Oh, it was rather a stroke of luck. Cotta's father laid it down in '60 and I picked it up for a song when they sold poor old Cotta up in 700.

'We really had a most delightful little dinner in spite of its simplicity. Cæsar was in a most engaging mood. I never could resist his charm. He always had the power of making you think that he considered you to be the most intelligent of all his friends. What a valuable gift!

'Eunoe, too, behaved very well; not too pert, yet not too modest. At first I did not tell Cæsar where she came from, meaning to break the news when he had had a skinful. But he was too clever for me.

'“And when did you last see Gergovia, my dear young lady?” said he to Eunoe, giving me a mocking smile. Eunoe was startled.

'“Then you knew I came from there?” she gasped.

'Cæsar laughed.

'“So many years in Gaul and not know the accents of her provinces? You and Lucullus here must think me a poor soldier and a worse administrator.”

'“Don't tease her,” said I. “I don't——”

'“No, no, she's far too pretty. But you're a cunning old fox, Lucullus. Still, never mind; I came to enjoy pleasant company and a good dinner. The comforts of civilisation are extraordinarily delightful after hard campaigning. But tell me,” he went on, turning to Eunoe, “do you ever sing any of those enchanting folk songs? There was one I remember particularly—something like this—give me that lute, boy—do you mind, Lucullus?”

'And then to his own accompaniment Cæsar sang to us in a rich baritone a most ravishing little song of Old Gaul.

'Eunoe, the little wretch, was quite swept off her feet and I felt a pang of jealousy—I, who can croak no better than a crow.

'Tears came into her eyes.

"Oh," she said, "none but those who love Gaul could sing her songs like that." And she seized his hand to kiss it.

'But Cæsar, at first captivated by her compliment, suddenly stiffened, his face like granite.

"Not yet," he muttered, drawing his hand away. Then softening :

"Ah, none but Gaul's sons and daughters can really sing her songs," he said, and put the lute into Eunoe's hands, smiling.

'So Eunoe sang and thereafter the lute passed backwards and forwards between them.'

'I'd no idea Cæsar had a voice. Had you, Lepidus?'

'Well, I knew he hummed a little, but I'd no idea he sang. Go on, Lucullus.'

'Well, the *entente* between them, as Cæsar called it, was complete and I actually began to feel *de trop*.

'At last Cæsar said he must get back to his camp.

"I cannot thank you enough for such a delightful evening, young lady. I have been transported back to your beautiful country by your sweet voice. If there is anything Cæsar can do for you——"

'Eunoe was no fool, but she was hardly ready for so easy an opening and blurted out, "Oh, there *is*, there *is*!"

"Oho," said Cæsar, fixing her with a quizzical look, "you're very eager, my dear! I wonder if our friend Lucullus is in the plot?"

'For the life of me I couldn't help feeling sheepish, and no doubt I looked it. Eunoe was abashed, but Cæsar only laughed.

"Come now," he said, "what is this boon? I am not a god, but I'll do what I can."

'Eunoe looked appealingly at me, which was unfair and just like a woman. I had provided the dinner; it was for Eunoe to work the oracle.

"Well?" said Cæsar, with a touch of the grand manner.

"Oh, sir," said Eunoe, "what I ask is so great a thing that I am afraid to ask it."

"Tut tut," said Cæsar, "we mustn't beat about the bush like this. Shall I help you? Is it, perhaps, connected with a certain person and the Capitoline?"

'Eunoe nodded.

"I thought as much," said Cæsar, no longer smiling. "You would have me see him, I suppose.

"You know, Lucullus, how I have been pestered to see Vercingetorix. Day after day importunate people have come to see me, have waylaid me to put the case. Senators, generals, lawyers, men of letters. My life has been made a burden." I had never seen Cæsar so moved; the words poured from him as he paced up and down impatiently. "What good could it do if I were to see him? Perhaps I might release him? How shortsighted people are! Apart from a pardon on such an occasion being revolutionary, think of the disastrous effect. Why, the news would set Gaul ablaze from end to end and for all the good it would do Vercingetorix"—Cæsar laughed harshly—"we should have to arrest him again and execute him without a moment's delay."

"D'you think I'm not sorry for this dreadful business? You know I'm compassionate. I'm not a fire-eater. If I thought that his release would be anything but a calamity—but no; it's useless to consider it. Besides, he would not go if I unlocked his prison doors myself."

'Suddenly he stopped. "Do you still press me to see him?" he asked Eunoe.'

'Poor little thing, she could not withstand his gaze, and her eyes dropped before his. But she stuck to her point manfully.'

"Oh, yes, please! please!" she whispered with her head averted.'

'Don't be melodramatic, Lucullus. Writing for that new evening paper you've just acquired is debasing your style. Don't you agree, Catulus?'

'Oh, quite! The complete journalist.'

'Look here, if I can't tell the story in my own way I won't tell it at all.'

'Never mind these mockers, Lucullus. Your tale is enthralling. How did the great man take Mistress Eunoe's persistence?'

'He positively beamed. His whole face twinkled.'

"I never could resist a woman's determination," he said with a chuckle. "How weak we are, Lucullus. But I'll promise nothing. I'll sleep on it. You know that I meant and still mean every word I said. I am convinced no good can come from an interview. But—we'll see. And now good night, Lucullus, and thank you. Mistress Eunoe, good night. I cannot thank you enough for your songs. They have made history in the past. Who knows?—perhaps they may again."

'I saw him to his litter, bearing the lamp myself. He said:

"I'll let you know in the morning what I've decided, Lucullus. Meanwhile, not a word."

'He is a great man. Only a man above ordinary men would have risked his reputation by revoking what all had understood to be an irrevocable decision.'

'You have nothing to drink, Catulus. Try some of my *aqua vitæ*, from Scythia again, like the caviare. It's a clean, wholesome drink, though potent.'

'What exotic liquors you indulge in, Lucullus. What d'you call this fiery stuff?'

'In Scythia, they call it vodka. They drink it as we would Mamertinian. For me, quite a small cup is enough.'

'For my part, I am charmed by your Potalanian, Lucullus. A sound wine, yet light. I envy you your cellar.'

'There is no one whose judgment I trust more than yours, Lepidus. But I have something better than the Potalanian. I'd value your opinion on it—and yours too, Catulus, if your palate's not ruined by the vodka—Phocos, bring an amphora of Imperial Setinian, bin 77.'

'Setinian? Why, that's surely the new wine Cæsar himself introduced, isn't it? Didn't you tell me of it the other day, Catulus?'

'Yes. It should be an apt accompaniment to the rest of your story, Lucullus.'

'Well, perhaps. You call it new, Lepidus. Wait till you experience it. A smooth, full-bodied wine. To my taste, quite supreme. Here it is. Be tender with it, Phocos. Well, Lepidus?'

'Hm . . . Hm . . . you're right, Lucullus. What a bouquet!'

'Catulus?'

'Nectar, Lucullus, if I'm any judge. Where does it come from.'

'From the hills looking down on the Pomptine Marshes, just above the Appian Forum.'

'You must give me the name of your wine merchant, Lucullus. I really must get some of this. But do go on with your story.'

'Oh, yes. Where was I? Oh, ah. Cæsar had just gone back to his headquarters. Well, about the eighth hour next day—the day before the triumph—I was enjoying my siesta when a runner came with a note from Cæsar bidding me go with him that night to the Tullianum and to bring Eunoe.'



'You will imagine that this message caused me some disquiet—not for myself, of course, but for Eunoe. I was most disinclined to take her, but as usual I was wax in her hands. Cæsar would never have sent such a message, she argued, had he intended anything but good. Besides, she had dreamed of a white goose which had belonged to her in Gergovia as a child and that was a very good omen, as even the chief augur himself would have to admit.

'Well, we went; Eunoe was in a state of great excitement. But I thought I knew my Cæsar. I could not believe that he would let a chit of a girl, however charming, deflect his policy.

'When we arrived we were met at the gates of the prison by the Captain of the Guard, one Metellus. He bowed to Eunoe with a grave face and motioned us to enter.

'“Cæsar awaits you in the guard-room,” he said in perfect Gallic—or perfect at least it seemed to me, who have no gift of tongues.

'The use of her own language captured Eunoe's heart, and she said to me in a loud whisper, “What a charming officer!”

'Metellus preceded us, the tips of his ears showing that Eunoe's whisper had had its effect. He led us through a labyrinth of passages which seemed to be cut out of the Tarpeian itself. A most forbidding abode.

'The guard-room was little better than the approach and there we found Cæsar playing a curious game with one of the soldiers on a chequered board with strangely wrought ivory pieces.

'“Ah, Lucullus,” he said, looking up, “you should learn chess,” waving his hand towards the board. “The best training I know for amateur strategists.

'“So you've brought Mistress Eunoe to brave the terrors of the Tullianum.”

'“Oh, no,” said Eunoe. “I brought *him*. If he hadn't come, I should have come alone.”

'Cæsar laughed.

'“The modern girl,” he said. “Well, remember that you pressed me to this interview. I did not invite it.”

'“Oh, come, Cæsar,” said I, “that's hardly fair, is it? Neither of us suggested that we should be present.”

'“True, my Lucullus,” said Cæsar dryly. “But on thinking it over, it occurred to me that it would not be inopportune to prove my case to a countrywoman of the prisoner and to one of the first gentlemen of Rome at the same time.

"But I warn you, my dear young lady," he went on, turning to Eunoe and speaking with sudden gravity, "the interview will not be pleasant. It will try your courage and your patriotism. There. Let us go, Metellus."

'Once more we were led through grim passages right into the heart of the rock.'

'Br-r-r-r. You were lucky to escape, Lucullus.'

'My dear fellow! Cæsar would never have dared!'

'I'm not so sure. But go on.'

'Well, he was most courtly, helping Eunoe over rough places and entreating her with great kindness.'

'Presently, Metellus stopped before a heavy bronze door in the wall. A soldier turned a great key in the lock and threw the door open. We entered, Metellus leading the way. It was a dark cell and Eunoe shrank back on the threshold. The beam from Metellus's lantern seemed but to make the gloom of the place more profound and cast monstrous shadows on the rugged walls.'

'At first I could see no living creature, but as my eyes became accustomed to the darkness I perceived the one we had come to see crouching in a corner of the cell, his hair unkempt, his clothes but filthy rags, his eyes staring.'

'As he realised our number, he drew in his breath sharply and then stood erect to face us, drawing himself up to his full height.'

"Your hour is not yet, Vercingetorix," said Metellus. "Cæsar is come to visit you."

'Cæsar stepped forward into the light of the lantern and saluted.'

'Vercingetorix did not stir but stood staring, his hands clasped behind him.'

"Shall we not greet each other," said Cæsar, "if not as friends, at least as soldiers?"

'Still Vercingetorix did not move.'

"Sir," said Cæsar, "I have come to offer you your freedom. One whose pleadings I could not resist, has begged it of me."

'As he spoke, Cæsar drew Eunoe forward into the lamp-light. A shudder passed over Vercingetorix as his gaze fell on Eunoe and his voice came hoarsely.'

"What hideous new torture is this, tyrant? Or am I dreaming?"

'His hands unclasped themselves and stretched out towards Eunoe. Suddenly he screamed—"Away with the harlot! Away with her, I say, traitress!"'

‘Eunoe stood her ground.

“Don’t you remember me, Vercingetorix? I was taken the year before you. I have prayed for your release and now Cæsar has come himself to set you free.”

‘She took a step towards him.

“Back, harlot!” he snarled. “Free, d’you say? What for? Docile, to walk the streets of Rome, Cæsar’s reformed barbarian?”

‘He laughed savagely.

“Oh, no!” cried Eunoe. “Cæsar is generous. He would give you an honourable freedom.”

“Ha! Free to go back to Gaul? To become a fat burgess of Gergovia! To sit in the sun, one of the Conquered! To be pointed out by boys, who would say, ‘There’s Vercingetorix, Cæsar’s friend.’ What freedom!”

“You are ungenerous, friend,” said Cæsar. “I offer a gallant enemy freedom in place of an ignominious death. Believe me, I take a grave risk, endangering my policies, perhaps more than that. There is but one condition and one that I am bound to make for the safety of the State—that you do not return to Gaul for ten years to come.”

“Generous indeed, O mighty Cæsar! To be nothing but a lackey in the train of the conqueror! A fine fate for Vercingetorix, descendant of Kings! I will not take your limited liberty. And for that jade, I spit upon her, mistress to——”

‘No, I can’t bring myself to repeat his reference to myself. Eunoe, poor child, was stunned by his savagery and crept back to my side, while Vercingetorix lashed himself into a raving fury. Suddenly he hurled himself on Cæsar and seized him by the throat. It was a horrid scene. Eunoe screamed, but Metellus struck him down with a terrible blow. He staggered back to the corner of the cell, where he slipped to the ground, blood pouring from his head.

‘And so we left him, Cæsar having given orders for his own surgeon instantly to attend on the prisoner. Cæsar himself bore Eunoe back tenderly to the guard-room, for she was fainting from the ordeal. In the guard-room we were given wine.

“Well, Lucullus,” said Cæsar, “are you convinced?”

‘And I, daring greatly, said, “Could not the conqueror even now show mercy to the vanquished?”

‘Cæsar flushed a little.

"Perhaps you have clearer vision, Mistress Eunoe?" he said.

"But Eunoe sat silently, her eyes filled with tears.

"Cæsar sighed. "One day the scales will fall from the eyes of my friends and they will see clearly. My soldiers. Think you they would obey me did I order the release of the captive? They have not the subtlety of a Roman gentleman, Lucullus. And Vercingetorix, poor fellow, is untamable. Honour him for it. His ambition has not been broken, nor his pride. But were he set free, they would turn sour and his barbarian blood would drive him to become a bandit and assassin.

"No. To-night has but confirmed my resolution and his execution is as inevitable a fate as the climax in the 'Agamemnon.' His violence is but superficial and the result of a long captivity. Beneath the surface we understand each other well, he and I. My subtlety is greater than yours, Lucullus, but your kindness would be more cruel than my inflexibility. And if it is my lot to be misunderstood by my progressive friends, so be it. 'Tis the burden of him who commands." And then—"You should take Mistress Eunoe home, Lucullus. She has not a man's strength. Metellus here will detail men to conduct you, for these are wild times. Fare you well. Farewell, Mistress, and think not too ill of Cæsar."

"And so we left him sitting down to finish the strange game which our coming had interrupted.

"Fill my cup, Phocos. I'm parched with talking."

"Tell me, Lucullus, what happened to the fair Eunoe?"

"Eunoe? Ah, that's another story."

## WHILE DR. JOHNSON TOURED SCOTLAND.

BY A. WATKIN-JONES.

It so happened that in the late summer of 1773 there were at least three distinguished travellers making the 'grand tour' of parts of Scotland. The narrative of Dr. Johnson's itinerary is well known, through his own *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, as well as through Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides*. Whatever enthusiastic Johnsonians may care to advance in praise of Johnson's own journal—and it has its points—there can be no doubt that Boswell's book is not only the better journal but one of the best of its kind ever penned. The human touch and the personal details of everyone, great and small, which place Boswell's book far above almost all eighteenth-century books of travel, is also a quality apparent in the narrative of the third of our travellers, Thomas Percy. Curiously enough, these three dogged one another's footsteps during August, 1773, in Edinburgh, at Loch Lomond and elsewhere. How much or how little they knew of one another's movements it is not easy to guess; but it is highly diverting to find them visiting the same places and even making the same comments thereon.

Percy was at this time in attendance at Alnwick Castle, as chaplain to the Duke of Northumberland, and apparently found leisure from his duties to cross the border. This was not his first visit to Scotland, for he had previously spent part of October, 1765, in Glasgow and Edinburgh, calling on Sir David Dalrymple, Dr. Blair, Dr. Robertson and others (*Diary*). He arrived in Edinburgh early in August and on Sunday, 8th, he married, at the 'Chief Episcopal Chapel,' George Durant (of Tong Castle, Shropshire, M.P. for Evesham) to Miss Maria Beaufoy, of Lambeth, in Surrey, who came of a well-known Quaker family (Percy's *Diary*). He then accompanied the newly married couple in a short tour to Loch Lomond, leaving Edinburgh on the 10th. During these few days in town he visited several acquaintances, including Boswell. His *Diary* informs us that on Tuesday, August 10th, he breakfasted 'with Mr. Boswell and went with him to the Court of Sessions.' The same day he left for Glasgow and Inverary.

Boswell was expecting Johnson to reach Edinburgh any day that week and was hoping that he would arrive before the courts rose on the 11th. But actually he did not arrive until the 14th: he was still at Newcastle on the 11th. He spent four days in Edinburgh and then made his first stage to St. Andrews. So that he and Percy missed one another by a margin of four days.

It is rather strange that Percy should not have waited a few days in Edinburgh to greet his distinguished acquaintance. There is no reason to think that he was especially pressed for time, and one would expect that Boswell would have told him of Johnson's impending arrival. We know that they had their quarrels from time to time, and one of their severer disputes arose later over their opinions of Pennant as writer of *Tours* (Boswell's *Johnson*). This particular bickering may very well have been over Pennant's recently published *Tour to Scotland* (1772), as each would consider himself something of an authority on Scottish Tours, in 1778. But there is no indication in our documents that this was a period of warfare in 1773. They were well acquainted: Johnson had spent weeks at Percy's vicarage in Northamptonshire as far back as 1764, and Percy had been a member of the Literary Club since 1768. Yet this hasty departure to Glasgow on the 10th, possibly knowing that Johnson was expected daily, does not square with the known characteristics of one who never lost a chance of cultivating the celebrated and the influential. This makes it the more probable, as we shall see later, that he was not told of Johnson's coming visit. Only four days later an encounter was still possible. Percy's tour was very brief, and he was again passing through Edinburgh on the 13th, on his return. Here he parted company with the Durants, who were staying on a little longer, and then making for Shropshire. The data here are rather confusing; but what seems the most reasonable explanation is that he travelled the eighty-one miles (he gives the figure) from Loch Lomond, through Dumbarton and Glasgow, on this Friday, and then proceeded south very early next morning, 'at 4 o'clock in the Newcastle Post Coach,' as his *Diary* notes. He eventually reached Alnwick 'early in the evening' of Saturday. Again he missed Johnson, this time by a few hours: this is all very puzzling and highly intriguing. Is it possible that Boswell deliberately refrained from breathing a word of his friend's approaching visit, lest someone else should engross him when faithful Bozzy had so patiently engineered this tour to the Hebrides to have his hero all to himself?



The two itineraries are very different in scope, and yet at the same time similar in many details. Had Boswell and Johnson inverted their route, so to say, the coincidence of the two tours would have been remarkable. It would have given us all the excitement of discovering how near people may approach each other on a journey of this kind without actually meeting. But even as it turned out, there are many interesting comparisons to be made in the tours.

Percy gives the account of his journey in a long letter to his wife, written after getting back to Alnwick, on the 17th August. A few corroborative details are helpfully supplied in the meagre jottings in his *Diary*. We learn that after leaving Edinburgh on the 10th, he reached Inverary on the 12th, and there viewed the Duke of Argyll's Palace. We are given a very brief description of the building, which is 'built in the castle-style but so exceedingly inferior to Alnwick Castle.' But Percy finds the situation very agreeable, and marvels much at finding a 'palace' in so remote and wild a situation, 503 miles from the Metropolis. Boswell and Johnson were not to reach Inverary until October 24: in the meantime they had achieved a considerable itinerary through Aberdeen, Inverness and the Hebrides. Johnson himself has very little to say of the Duke's residence: he merely remarks that 'we were very kindly entertained at his splendid seat, and supplied with conveniences for surveying his spacious park and rising forests.' But from Boswell we get amusing details, in which he is himself the unconscious humorist. Apart from noting that 'Dr. Johnson was much struck by the grandeur and elegance of this princely seat,' but thought 'the castle too low,' he pays scant attention to the buildings. What concerns him to the exclusion of almost all else is his failure to pacify the Duchess. He had offended her some time back, and do what he might, she refused to countenance his presence, though the guest of the Duke. Boswell's pretence at indifference, and even sympathy with the Duchess's point of view, is completely exposed by his continual harping on the theme of her displeasure. From Inverary, Johnson 'proceeded southward over Glencroe,<sup>1</sup> a black and dreary region, made easily passable by a military road.' At the top of the pass, he came across a seat with the curious but appropriate inscription, 'Rest, and be thankful.' Percy had previously noticed the 'military road made by Govern-

<sup>1</sup> Percy spells it 'Glencrow.' But Scott uses the still-existing form 'Glencroe' in his novels. Cf. *Rob Roy*, chap. 28.

ment all thro' Scotland soon after the last Rebellion,' and also the inscription. He gives it more fully: 'Rest and be thankful. 1748. Made by the XXIII Regiment.' Rather unusually, he seems to have been roused to almost lyric utterance by the scenery of this district. Johnson could only find space for a remark or two on the islands in Loch Lomond, and they 'disgust him at his approach, when he finds, instead of soft lawns and shady thickets, nothing more than uncultivated ruggedness.' But Thomas Percy, for once, became 'enthusiastic' in his admiration for a beautiful scene:

'Here I saw the most extraordinary scene in the world; we were got up a great height amid the hills, and yet in this elevation a clear level narrow lake ran for two miles beside the road: beyond the lake rose a huge rocky mountain of great height, having its summit all the way ingulphed (*sic*) in a cloud, that spread along its brow like a curtain; and here we saw a couple of eagles on the wing soaring over our heads, and every now and then alighting on a huge craggy rock that projected out of the cloud, but at such a tremendous height that we should not have known they were birds of that size, if we had not compared them with the sheep that were grazing at nearly the same distance. So striking a scene I never saw.'

This is not to say, by way of contrast, that Johnson never responded to such scenes, for his book contains many noble passages on this topic of natural scenery. At Anoch, before crossing over to Skye, he tells us that one day he

'sat down on a bank, such as a writer of romance might have delighted to feign. I had indeed no trees to whisper over my head, but a clear rivulet streamed at my feet. The day was calm, the air soft, and all was rudeness, silence, and solitude.'

Then he sums up his thoughts in a characteristic way:

'Regions mountainous and wild, thinly inhabited, and little cultivated, make a great part of the earth, and he that has never seen them, must live unacquainted with much of the face of nature, and with one of the great scenes of human existence.'

After spending a couple of days with Sir James Colquhoun at Rosedow, and calling on Smollett's kinsman at Cameron, Boswell and Johnson finally made for Dumbarton and Glasgow, reaching there on October 28, and were ultimately back in Edinburgh on November 9, after a journey of some eighty-three days.

Compared to this, Percy's hasty jaunt of five days seems inadequate: but he managed to observe a great deal in a short time. For our immediate interest, perhaps it would be convenient to discuss one topic on which all three tourists dilate frequently, and we have one readily at hand in their complaints of the sleeping accommodation which they had to endure in these wild districts. In some notes entitled 'Observanda in the Tour into Scotland August 1773,' Percy tells an amusing story of his experiences at 'the Little Highland Inn at Carn-dow,' on Loch Fyne, which vividly reminds one of the inn at the not too distant Clachan of Aberfoil, where Osbaldistone, Bailie Nicol Jarvie, and Andrew Fairservice found similar conditions prevailing (*Rob Roy*, chaps. 28-30). The travellers, after an adventurous passage 'along a wild vale called Glen-Crow,' reached the inn on the banks of Loch Fyne at midnight. After much argument, they gained admittance, and presently some food. The house seemed to be full of people sleeping in the most unexpected corners, even in the supper-room. Young Mrs. Durant was completely unnerved at the prospect of sleeping with 'naked Highlanders' snoring all round her, and passed a very uneasy night. In the morning to her consternation, she was awakened by five men, three soldiers and two Highlanders, emerging noisily from a 'Cloathes Press' in her room—who 'had slept all night with her in the same chamber!' Percy himself had slept soundly in 'very sweet clean sheets' in the supper-room, and evidently enjoyed the young bride's embarrassment.

Boswell and Johnson in their turn had many amusing and disconcerting experiences in the crude hostelrys of these western districts. At Anoch, they were hospitably entertained and found good company, but the conditions for comfortable sleeping were sadly wanting.

'We had much hesitation, whether to undress or lie down with our clothes on. I said at last, "I'll plunge in! there will be less harbour for vermin about me when I am stripped." Dr. Johnson said, he was like one hesitating whether to go into the cold bath. At last he resolved too.'

Johnson fell asleep at once, but poor Boswell was not so fortunate: 'I fancied myself bit by innumerable vermin under the clothes; and that a spider was travelling from the wainscot towards my mouth. At last I fell into insensibility' (*Tour*, August 31.) He was distinctly unlucky at this time in his efforts to obtain a good

night's rest, of which during these arduous weeks he stood in dire need. The previous week at Slains Castle, he had 'a most elegant room'; but the fire made weird noises, the sea roared outside, and the feathers in his pillow smelt disagreeably. To crown all his difficulties, his imagination got to work, and recollecting recent conversation, he began to 'see' Lord Errol's father, Lord Kilmarnock, who was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1764—'and I was somewhat dreary!'

At Glenelg, on September 1, they were again in bad straits. The room was 'damp and dirty, with bare walls, a variety of bad smells, a coarse black, greasy fir table and forms of the same kind; and out of a wretched bed started a fellow from his sleep, like Edgar in *King Lear*, "*Poor Tom's a-cold*"' (Boswell's *Tour*). Dr. Johnson alludes to this sleeper as 'a man black as a Cyclops from the Forge' (*Journey*). When it came time to rest, he buttoned himself up in his great coat, ordered a bundle of hay into the room, and lay down on that. 'Mr. Boswell, being more delicate, laid himself sheets with hay over and under him, and lay in linen like a gentleman.' Yet, the first remark in Boswell's entry for the following day reads, 'I had slept ill.' The elegant spread of sheets had evidently not given him the feeling of security and comfort so necessary to James Boswell, Esq. From all indications, Boswell and Percy together on tour would have fussed enough about their accommodation to rouse the kingdom. These two had many characteristics in common.

On the road from Slains Castle to Banff, on August 25, Boswell and Johnson were discussing a project of setting up a college at St. Andrews with a staff drawn from the 'Club.' Playfully they distributed offices: Boswell was to teach Law, Dr. Johnson to undertake Metaphysics, and to Percy was allotted Theology and Antiquities. Again on September 24, in Skye, Percy came into the conversation. They were talking of the *raconteurs* among their acquaintance, and it was Johnson's opinion that 'Birch excelled Percy in that, as much as Percy excels Goldsmith.' But never a word from Boswell all this time that he had met Percy recently on Scottish soil; and we were left as we began with this pleasing little mystery of their relations at this time.

## NOTE ON SOURCES.

The Percy data drawn from Brit. Mus. MSS.—

(1) Percy's *Diary*: Add. MSS. 32336, 32337.

(2) His letters to Mrs. Percy: Add. MS. 39547. } Unpublished material.

## ENGLISH PRISONS TO-DAY.<sup>1</sup>

BY REV. GORDON LANG.

It is distinctly unfortunate that the recent regrettable and unexpected mutiny at Dartmoor convict prison should have been used as the jumping-off ground for discussions upon the wisdom or otherwise of the English prison system. Incidents such as the one referred to, happily extremely rare in this country, do not afford the slightest material ground upon which to form any adequate opinion as to the value and validity of any system either to prevent crime or treat the criminal. What do arise out of such incidents are endless debates as to whether the prison regime is brutal and block-headed or whether convicts may not be overmuch coddled and pampered in an age which is generally supposed to carry sentimentality to the furthest extreme.

Before we undertake an examination of the prison system as it is actually working in England to-day it is necessary to consider some features of the prison population and also to consider some aspects of the problem of punishment. The remarkable feature of the prison population in recent years has been its steady decrease. The total receptions of prisoners on conviction during the year had decreased from 167,100 in 1904 to 43,998 in 1924, and had further fallen to 36,942 in 1929, which is the lowest number yet reached. Whereas before the war it was a regular thing to find some thousand or more persons sentenced to penal servitude each year, the number of such sentences has now fallen to considerably under five hundred, while the sentences of penal servitude upon women have been less than twenty for each of the last three years. In fact, it would appear to be probable that there will be no women convicts (as distinct from local prisoners) within the near future. In any consideration of this remarkable decrease in the gaol population it must be borne in mind that the Probation Act is much more freely used than was formerly the case, though not so much as the Prison Commissioners in their Annual Reports suggest might

<sup>1</sup> The author, who has just completed a personal investigation into the working of the English Prison System, under the auspices of the late Home Secretary, is publishing his conclusions this September in a volume bearing the same title as this article.

be the case. The general tendency to inflict shorter sentences has also a material bearing, while the development of the Borstal Institutions has taken from the prison something like twelve hundred young persons. With the exception of the Borstal Institutions, where the numbers are rising and likely to continue to do so, and the Preventive Detention Prisons, in which the decrease, though marked, must obviously be slow on account of the long terms for which preventive detention is awarded, the general gaol population shows a reduction of about one-half as compared with the last full pre-war year. The average daily number of persons in prison in England and Wales during 1929 was 9,525 as compared with 17,227 in 1913. These figures do not include the receptions into Borstal Institutions.

If the figures of general receptions are satisfactory the analysis of the categories of prisoners is rather less so. Most people would be surprised to learn that over 50 per cent of prisoners are accounted for under the three heads of (1) Committals on remand or for trial not followed by conviction or sentence, (2) Committals by civil process, chiefly for non-payment of money due, and (3) Committals in default of payment of fines. The third category accounts for about 18 per cent of the total of prisoners. Such then is the general nature of the prison population with whose treatment we are now concerned.

When enquiry is made into the *raison d'être* of this prison community we find it less easy to give precise facts and figures. No one seems very sure as to what is the object of imprisonment in this country. A few years ago Mr. Justice McCardie delivered an address to the Cambridge University Law Society in the course of which he asked :

‘What is the function of punishment? What is the object of the Criminal Law? Is the object of inflicting punishment on a man—if punishment be given—to reform, or is it to deter that man or others? And the curious feature of our system, and indeed of other systems, is this: that, so far as I can see, nobody has ever yet set forth with clearness the principles of punishment which ought to prevail.’

The complaint of the learned judge was only too well founded. From time to time eminent jurists have ventured to express quite definite views, but these have been wholly inconsistent with each other. Sir James Stephen, the author of *The History of Criminal Law in England*, stated that ‘the criminal law proceeds upon the



principle that it is morally right to hate criminals, and it confirms and justifies that sentiment by inflicting upon criminals punishments which express it.' Such a dictum embodies, of course, the principle of Retribution, a view also laid down by Sir Edward Fry in the words, 'the object of punishment is to adjust the suffering to the sin.' On the other hand, Professor Kenny, in his *Outlines of Criminal Law*, suggests that to most of the accepted authorities, deterrence was the main principle underlying punishment and says that the hope of preventing the repetition of the offence 'is not only a main object, but the sole permissible object of inflicting a criminal punishment.' It has never been properly decided whether Deterrence should apply to the criminal himself, or whether part of his suffering should be vicarious in the sense of acting as a warning and deterrent to others. The probability is that both these aspects are present in the mind of the judge when considering sentence. The morality of Retribution will largely be decided for himself by the individual's allegiance or otherwise to the old Jewish conception of 'An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth.' The efficacy of Deterrence as the reason or part of the reason for punishment does not receive much support from the statistics of Recidivism in crime. The total receptions into prison upon conviction in 1929 showed that 73 per cent of the prisoners had previous convictions, and over 33 per cent of the total had been convicted on five or more previous occasions, while over thirteen hundred of these had served previous terms of penal servitude, many of them more than once.

It would appear, therefore, that some element or principle other than, or additional to, those of Retribution and Deterrence is required in an intelligent and socially useful theory and practice of punishment. The Prison Commissioners have recognised this and in their Report for 1925-6 inserted an admirable summary of the position, as follows:

'Prisons exist to protect society, and they can only give efficient protection in one of two ways, either (a) by removing the anti-social person from the community altogether or for a very long period; or, (b) by bringing about some change in him. Any general application of the first method would not be supported by public opinion. The prison administration must therefore do its utmost to apply the second; that is to say, to restore the man who has been imprisoned to ordinary standards of citizenship, so far as this can be done within the limits of his sentence. Unless

some use can be made of the period of imprisonment to change the anti-social outlook of the offender and to bring him into a more healthy frame of mind towards his fellow-citizens, he will, on leaving the prison gates after a few weeks or months, again become a danger or at any rate a nuisance. He may, indeed, be worse than before, if the only result has been to add a vindictive desire for revenge on society to the selfish carelessness of the rights of others which he brought into prison with him. The change can be, and is, effected in a good many cases by vigorous industrial, mental, and moral teaching, pursued on considered lines by officers, teachers and prison visitors of character and personality. The effect of such training, properly conducted, is to induce self-respect, to lessen self-conceit (characteristic of many prisoners on first reception) and to arouse some sense of personal responsibility. Failures there are, and always will be, but the records of successes justify the system and the efforts of those who work to carry it out.'

A careful and comprehensive investigation into and inspection of the prison system as it is working to-day has convinced the writer that it is entirely in this spirit that the regime of imprisonment in this country is being carried out to-day. It is entirely wrong to suppose, as many do, that the alterations and improvements are only to be seen in minor adjustments. There are many of these, but the whole atmosphere of prison has been entirely changed in the last few years. It really is a revolutionary change. Gone are the utter hopelessness and complete helplessness which were once characteristic of the English gaol and which affected prisoners and prison officials alike. Prison is still a very uncomfortable place, as, indeed, it is meant to be and must be, but it is not entirely a soul-destroying institution. When I was visiting at Holloway, which is now the women's convict prison for the whole of England, as well as the local prison for some twenty-two counties, I often felt that I was in hospital and not in prison at all.

The minor changes in prison life have been mostly those which have removed the brutal and utterly stupid degradation from the system, so that there is now less likelihood of the prisoner feeling that he is just a caged beast. These new adjustments include the abolition of the hideous broad arrows on prison clothing, the provision of adequate enamel washing utensils instead of the old tin bowl, permission to shave with safety razors, and much better conditions for the visits of friends and relatives. More exercise is permitted, there are educational classes and the horror of solitary confinement has been abolished except as a punishment for gross

breaches of prison discipline, and even then its use is strictly conditioned.

One of the most reliable indications of the new methods and their results is furnished by the returns of punishments inflicted upon prisoners and convicts for prison offences. In local prisons, the percentage of those punished in 1913-14 was 12.8, this percentage had fallen in 1929 to as low as 4.2. With regard to the industry of prisoners, which reflects more than any other phase of prison life, the general attitude of the prisoner, the figures are even more impressive. In 1913-14 the percentage of prisoners punished for idleness was 16.1, whereas in 1928 it had fallen so low as to be 0.9. Equally striking are the figures for male convict prisons. The average number of convicts punished each year for the few years prior to 1907 was 1,607. In 1929 this figure had shrunk to 244, a reduction in percentage of the difference between 37.4 and 12.2. No table of returns of corporal punishments inflicted would add much to the value of our enquiry. It is true that here again there has been, on the whole, a notable decrease, but the figures are very unsteady, for, whereas the number of prisoners flogged for prison offences in 1902 was 44 and had fallen to 17 in 1929, the total in 1922 was only 3 persons all told. However, varied factors operate in this matter, one of which is the fact that all sentences of flogging have to be confirmed by the Home Secretary before they are carried out. It is, perhaps, important to point out that in recent years corporal punishment in prison is only awarded for offences of gross violence, and it may be well to refute definitely the oft-repeated statement that convicts are often flogged by instalments of the number of lashes to which they may be sentenced. The prison medical officer is always required to be in attendance when a flogging is administered and if he decides that it is inimical to the health of the prisoner for the punishment to be continued it is immediately stopped. Not once, within the memory of any present officer in the prison service, has the punishment, once stopped, been continued at any subsequent date. There will be wide differences of opinion as to the need and efficacy of corporal punishment in prisons but, brutal and degrading as the infliction of the 'cat-o'-nine-tails' is, it would appear to the writer to be salutary and necessary, and, under the present strict surveillance, safe punishment.

It is now possible to turn to a more detailed examination of prison life in England to-day and to see in operation the methods

by which the Prison Commissioners hope 'to restore the man who has been imprisoned to ordinary standards of citizenship, so far as this can be done within the limits of his sentence.' No one will doubt the hardness of the task. The types of persons received into prison vary as much as does the nature of the offences for which they have been sentenced. It is interesting, if depressing, to witness the arrivals late in the afternoon, at any large prison, of the day's receptions. They will include men and women, young and old, first offenders and persons steeped in vice and crime, the jaunty and the crushed, the person who ought never to have come at all and some of whom one is tempted to think that they ought never to go out again.

Most people are familiar with the broad distinction between local and convict prisons. To the local prisons are sent persons on remand or for trial, debtors, persons sentenced to the Second Division or to hard labour for terms up to two years, and, of course, all prisoners immediately after sentence, irrespective of the length and of whether the imprisonment is to be hard labour or penal servitude. The maximum sentence of hard labour is for two years, though, in practice, this term is not often awarded by judges, and eighteen months is a more frequent term for bad offences. The minimum term for which a sentence of penal servitude is imposed is three years. In the provinces the local prisons generally receive all sorts of prisoners, but the London prisons are now classified, with considerable advantage to all concerned. To Wormwood Scrubbs, for instance, go all first offenders, or rather, those convicted for the first time, while there is also a separate wing for Borstal cases and for the boys' prison.

It is essential that, so far as it can be done, young offenders and those convicted for the first time should not be brought into contact with persons older in criminal habits, and in the doing of this the prison authorities have largely made the distinction between Second Division and Third Division prisoners unnecessary. The only difference in the two divisions now is this segregation. The actual treatment and discipline are practically the same. Nor is there much distinction nowadays between prisoners sentenced to hard labour and those who are ordered imprisonment without the qualification. Apart from the first fourteen days of the sentence, during which hard-labour prisoners, unless they be over sixty or are excused on medical grounds, are not allowed a mattress, and do not, as a rule, work in association, the conditions of imprison-

ment are not different. The prisoner's working day is normally one of eight hours in association with others, and two hours in his cell in the evening, though the latter is excused in the event of attendance at some educational class. The work is of a varied nature and includes the making of mail-bags, brushes, woodwork and sewing and tailoring as well as the laundry, cookery and general routine of work necessary to the running of any large establishment. Each prisoner is responsible for the cleanliness and tidiness of his own cell. There is a certain amount of outdoor work, though in some of the larger provincial prisons, as at Strangeways gaol, Manchester, for instance, the opportunities of this are so restricted as to be inadequate. Various considerations operate to determine the kind of labour to which a prisoner may be put, and not the least of these is the result of the medical examination. Most of the work done is for one or other of the departments of His Majesty's Government, and there is urgent need for the overhauling of the restrictions of the trade unions with regard to the sale of prison-manufactured articles. The industries of rug- and mat-making, weaving and engineering might be more generally developed if there was a greater opportunity of disposing of the goods when made. This would also have an important bearing upon one aspect of prison reform which must be seriously considered before long, namely that of the payment of prisoners.

The monotony of prison life has been considerably relieved in recent years by the notable increase in the facilities for work in association and the introduction of school classes and evening lectures on various topics has also a similar tendency. There are classes at which attendance is compulsory for prisoners who need elementary instruction but attendance at the other lectures and classes is optional. The subject-matter covers a very wide range in the different prisons and varies from lectures on bee-keeping and science to foreign languages and town planning. There has been considerable improvement in the prison libraries and in the issue of books from them. Prisoners can now have books sent in by relatives and friends, which, subject to the approval of the authorities, they may be allowed to read, the books subsequently being added to the prison library.

Every prison governor speaks unreservedly in praise of the good work done by the band of voluntary visitors to prisons. These visitors generally make themselves responsible for visiting and becoming interested in some six or seven prisoners and are able to

be of real help to the prisoners during their incarceration and of particular value to the authorities in trying to help the prisoners upon their discharge.

Opinions amongst the authorities vary somewhat as to the direct value of the religious ministrations which prisoners receive. One very important innovation of recent times was that which made attendance at the services optional instead of compulsory as was formerly the case. Most governors are agreed that this was a change for the better and attendances are, on the whole, better than before because there is now less inducement to find excuses for non-attendance. Whatever may be the view of officials other than the chaplain there can be no room for doubt as to his attitude to the voluntary rule. He is bound to welcome it, for he may now deal with his charges without the uncomfortable feeling that they are bound to be there to listen to him. This rule of voluntary attendance at services does not, for quite good and sufficient reasons, apply to the inmates of Borstal Institutions.

Mention should be made of one further innovation of recent years, and one which has a far-reaching effect upon the life of the prisoner—that is, the weekly news bulletin. This was originated during the war period when it was very necessary to encourage the increased production of certain products of prison labour. It was rightly thought that the prisoners would work better if they were informed from time to time of the progress of the war. So successful did this prove to be that after the cessation of hostilities prison governors themselves suggested the continuance and development of the idea. Since then the hearing of the weekly news has become one of the chief events in the relief of prison monotony. The news, which is carefully edited, consists of a résumé of the previous week's events of importance, including sporting news, and is read in the prison chapel by the governor or chaplain every Monday morning. It is not difficult to realise how welcome this 'break' must be and how it helps to occupy the minds of the prisoners, but there is a more far-reaching effect than this which is not felt until the prisoner is discharged and once more engaged in the outside world. The fact that he now has a general knowledge of the world's news and the political and other changes in his own country means that he is no longer bound to confess by his ignorance or confusion that he has been shut away from his fellow-men for a considerable period. A matter like this, small as it may appear, is of tremendous importance in helping men who desire to go straight to keep



their self-respect and avoid the awkward enquiries and possibly ostracism of their fellows.

Persons who serve sentences of imprisonment, as distinct from penal servitude, may, by good conduct and industry, earn daily marks which entitle them to a remission of not more than one-sixth of the total sentence. This does not apply to those placed in the 'Young Prisoners' Class,' who, except in special circumstances, are required to serve their sentences in full in order that the fullest benefit may be obtained from the special physical and vocational training which is now arranged for them. The difficulties of adequate training are increased by the fact that most of the sentences passed upon young persons are comparatively short, but every effort is made to help the young offender to pull himself together, and, as far as possible, young prisoners are kept apart from others in an ordinary prison or else sent to a Young Prisoners' Centre. This class includes all male prisoners under 21 and female prisoners under 25. There are further divisions of prisoners who are just a few years older, but they are not of very great importance.

Any enquiry into methods of penal reform would be inadequate without some consideration of the question of short sentences. No one doubts the gravity of the decision to send a young person to prison for the first time, but when it is not, by reason of age or other circumstances, a proper case for Borstal it becomes graver still. While some of the young people sent to prison ought not to have been so sentenced at all, most of them should have been sent for longer periods. Prison authorities are faced with an almost insoluble difficulty when they are expected to improve the physical and mental faculties of prisoners who are only in their charge for a period of three, or even six, months. The shock of imprisonment to a sensitive youth is as great if the sentence be one month as if it be six and to the jaunty and careless the short term may suffice to make him realise that prison is not quite so bad a place as he has been led to think it is. In either case serious damage is done. Prison ought to be a forbidding place to everyone outside its walls, but once it is deemed necessary to send people inside, they should be committed for a sufficiently long period to enable a real attempt at reclamation into decent citizens to be made. If objection is taken to this proposal on the ground of expense it need only be pointed out that it is far cheaper to the State to keep an offender in prison for one year and make a decent

citizen of him than it is to have him returning to prison at regular intervals for many years.

As one would expect, it is in the case of convicts serving the long sentences of penal servitude that the widest operation of the new spirit and practice in prison regime is to be found. Here, where the least period of imprisonment is for a term of three years, and the average sentence is five years or more there is a real opportunity and hope of accomplishing something worth while. All female convicts are now sent to Holloway Prison, London, except a few women who are serving life sentences (reprieved death sentences) for child murder who are at Aylesbury. The number of women convicts is, however, so small, being round about sixty, that it is not necessary to discuss their treatment here. A more interesting though, in this article, quite irrelevant discussion would be as to the cause of the remarkable shrinkage in the number of women sent to penal servitude.

To return to the male convicts, who are now our concern. The first big step taken has been in the matter of classification. This classification is not determined by the judge at the trial nor by the governor of the prison into which the convict is first received after sentence but is determined by the Prison Commissioners. There are three classes: (1) the Star class; (2) the Intermediate class; and (3) the Recidivist class. It cannot be too clearly realised that the length of sentence plays no part in the allocation to a particular class. Convicts in the Star class are men who are not believed to be of usually criminal habits and who are not regarded as likely to contaminate others with whom they will have to associate. Thus, at Maidstone, which at present takes most of the Star convicts, one will find the fraudulent young clerk serving his first sentence, the solicitor who has embezzled, the corrupt financier and the murderer whose sentence of death has been commuted to penal servitude for life. It is the characteristics of the convict and not the severity of his sentence which determines his classification. The Intermediate class defines itself, for in this category are placed those who are not first offenders and whose habits render them unfit for inclusion with the 'Stars,' but who, by reason of the fact that their previous offences have not been very grave or very many, or by their youth, can yet be regarded as not coming within the group of Recidivists. The prison to which members of this class are committed is Parkhurst, in the Isle of Wight. In this prison also are to be found men from the

other classes who require special medical attention. This must not be confused with the care of persons found to be insane at the time of their crimes. Such prisoners, of course, go to Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum. The third or Recidivist class of convicts consists of those who have previously served terms of penal servitude or who have been otherwise sentenced for grave offences, and also some who though not previously convicted are known to have been living a life of crime. The practice up to date has been to receive this class at Dartmoor. It is, therefore, not without interest to note the sort of convict found at Dartmoor in view of recent serious and unprecedented attempts at mutiny there.

Convicts are able, by earning full marks, to earn a much more substantial remission of sentence than the other prisoners, the period in the case of female convicts being one-third and with male convicts one-fourth of the full sentence. To understand fully the method by which the objective of reform is reached with convicts it is essential to have a clear grasp of the 'Stage' system, as this is really the basis of the new regime. There are four stages and convicts must remain in the first of them for eighteen months. At the end of that time, if full marks for conduct and industry have been earned, they are entitled to promotion into the Second Stage. In this stage they may attend entertainments and lectures and indulge in a limited amount of evening recreation. Entry into the Third Stage may be reached after the expiry of a further twelve months, or, in the case of Star convicts, in half that time. Here there are important modifications of the régime, for convicts wear different dress, are allowed more furniture and comforts in their cells and may take their evening recreation in association with others when conversation is permitted and such games as chess and draughts may be played. The last stage is the Fourth or Special Stage, and no convict can secure promotion into this stage until he has served a full four years in prison. It is a very important stage indeed, for the convict may now have his meals in association with others, is allowed to talk at exercise and can earn small gratuities which he may spend on such comforts as tobacco or cigarettes, weekly newspapers and the like. The only difference in the treatment of women convicts under the Stage system is that they may qualify for entry into each stage in two-thirds of the time necessary in the case of men.

It will thus be seen that the whole tendency of modern prison treatment in this country is to win back wrongdoers to some

measure of self-respect and responsibility. Each additional privilege gained means that the man is a little more, just a little more, like the average well-behaved citizen outside the prison walls. The advantages of this cannot be over-estimated. The old method, by which everything was subject to a soulless mechanisation of routine and where the only thing left to a convict was to obey every regulation, could never equip a man for his battle with circumstances when once more he became a free person. It is a deal easier to live life entirely by regulation, where no initiative is required and no responsibility is incurred than otherwise. The failure of the old system was that it never prepared men for the ordeal of facing life again under normal conditions—and it is an ordeal after years of routine life behind prison walls. The humiliation of prison then lasted from the first day to the last day of the sentence. This no longer appertains, as has been seen, and the convict who really wishes to make good can steadily, if slowly, regain some of those conditions of modified freedom which, sooner than anything else, help him to recover his self-respect. What one indubitably feels about prison to-day is that it is no longer entirely hopeless for the prisoner. The road he has to travel is still a painful one and greatly restricted, as it must be. Prison must always remain a very uncomfortable place, but it need not be, and it is not a place on the portals of which can be inscribed, 'Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.' It would be idle to deny that there are some persons to be found in gaol who appear to be so thoroughly bad as to be beyond the pale of redemption by human effort. On the other hand, it would be a serious mistake to assume that the majority of prisoners are there through no fault of their own.

There would seem to be two chief dangers to the successful development of our present prison system. The one danger lies in regarding all prisoners as hopelessly wicked, and the other in assuming that all prisoners are proper subjects for any and every experiment of emotional passion. It is the presence of these two contrary opinions in the public mind which retards, or at least makes very difficult, courageous action on the part of the prison authorities. Any forward movement is met either with the cry that prisoners are coddled and pampered and their punishment made too easy or that prison authorities and the system they administer are brutal in the extreme. This article is meant to show clearly how very wrong both of these contentions are. Modern

applications of psychology have created something akin to a revolution in our conceptions of personality, and the thoroughly satisfactory thing about the English Prison System is that it does take into account, as far as is practicable, the personality of the people with whom it has to deal and no longer tries to deal with them in the lump. If, when public opinion is educated in the matter of Penal Reform, it becomes as sanely humane in expression as is the attitude of the Prison Commissioners there will be little to desire and nothing to regret in the treatment of the criminal.

Space does not permit of any detailed exposition of the comparatively recent introduction into the system of the Borstal method of treatment of the young offender. This reclamation of the youthful law-breaker and potential criminal is, perhaps, the hardest task of all, but it is being faced bravely, and there are already sufficient good results to justify it abundantly and, when necessary developments of the system are no longer held up by the demands of Economy, the good results will be more far-reaching still. There are four Borstal institutions for boys at present, those at Portland, Borstal (Rochester), Feltham and Lowdham, and one for girls at Aylesbury. A close inspection of these would furnish a revolution to the sceptically minded about the system. There is plenty of hard work, sound physical training, stern—though not meaningless—discipline—but there is much more than these. There is a definite attempt to get at the mind and personality of the young offender. Every effort is made to teach him, if not a trade, for the time scarcely permits of that, at least how to work hard and consecutively at some task. The 'House' system, very similar to that of modern schools, provides excellent training in responsibility and self-control, and here again there is the Stage system by which valued privileges can be gained as the reward of exemplary conduct and continued industry. A great advantage of Borstal is that the lads, after discharge, are under the care and control of the authorities for two years. The usual sentence to Borstal is for three years, of which time about two years and three months is the average period spent in an institution. Whether this period is quite long enough is a subject for difference of opinion, but it is certainly not too long. Each institution caters for a somewhat different type of youth from the others, but the atmosphere of all is one of friendly interest in and encouragement of the individual. It is a sight long to be remembered to see, on a Bank Holiday, some thirty or more 'old boys' come back to Borstal, dressed in their

best suits, to thank the governor and officers for what they have done and to relate the efforts now being made by them to run straight and to play the game. Prevention is better than cure in most affairs of life. In matters relating to crime it is all-important.

To visit a number of prisons is to develop a feeling of deep disturbance and not a little depression about humanity, but to move about any Borstal Institution is to experience a very deep thankfulness and an almost unconquerable hope.

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*STILL NIGHT.*

STILL are the trees, the darkened air is cool ;  
No wind rustles the grass, no footstep falls.  
The sky is calmer than a streamless pool.  
A mist has veiled the moon ; and no bird calls.

Faint from lit doorway and bright window-chink  
Come lively sounds : steps hasten, voices leap  
In mirth or question. And we idly think  
Within is waking and without is sleep.

Yet, more than we can guess, is Nature's cunning  
Now busied over leagues of silent earth,  
In striving root, bud swelling and sap running,  
To spur a myriad lives toward their birth ;

In the warm egg the young bird taps the shell,  
Between dark stems the eager hunters range :  
Unnumbered fortunes, faring ill or well,  
Know joy and death, conception, growth and change,

While we, unheeding within doors, will soon—  
Of food, talk, laughter having had our fill—  
Sleep sound ; or haply 'neath the setting moon  
Stir drowsily and say, ' the night is still.'

JAMES FERGUSON.



# TRAVELLER'S JOY.

BY E. H. LIDDERDALE.

'JEMAND zugestiegen?' Has anyone got in?

The enquiry, uttered in the minatory tone proper to German railway conductors, awoke Alma Marchant, nodding in her corner of the second-class coupé, to the fact that a fresh passenger had entered and taken the opposite seat; she opened her eyes and began to look eagerly out of window.

Tired with a night in an airless cabin on board the Channel steamer she had dozed while the great express thundered, southward bound, across the heathery Dutch flats, so lowly beneath their splendid skies, high-piled that late August morning with palaces of whitest summer-cloud. Even when it began to curve its way up the Rhine she had not fully roused herself; she lunched drowsily in the overheated restaurant car while the bottles leapt and fidgeted with each sudden bend in the line, and the waiters staggered at their task. Now the Rhine valley left behind, its mountains contracted to a far-off blue silhouette, the train was running among low hills, forest-crowned, upon whose flanks the narrow upward tilted strips of maize and wheat and bronzing barley showed like unskilful patchwork. A land of ancient farmsteads with steep brown roofs, of trout-streams hidden among thickets of meadow-sweet, and rough roads winding interminably between their shady borders of cherry and apple trees.

Every inch of the journey from London was familiar to her, but now that she was nearing Friedrichsheim, her destination, the interest deepened and grew poignant. Thirty years lay between Alma Marchant and her last view of this placid landscape, her memories of it went back to a time so sundered from the present as to have almost the bright aloofness of legend. She had been young here, ambitious, eager, the future had beckoned with hands full of gifts. Friedrichsheim had been the centre of her universe, her little stage, and the surrounding country the playground of her circle, where they had taken their pleasure on Sundays and holidays, theorising, arguing in the happy freemasonry of art. In the days when she used to return to Friedrichsheim after a

vacation in England, every nerve in her body had quickened at sight of these very hills. They were the last lap of the journey, already she had felt the curtain rising on another spell of work and hero-worship.

She had often wondered what would now be her reaction to the old associations and she had hesitated before accepting the invitation of a German friend to stop at Friedrichsheim on her way to Vienna. Nor was her misgiving purely sentimental, reasons of economy had played a part. Times were not bright for middle-aged musicians such as herself; with pupils and engagements falling off, if they contrived to pay their way they might be thankful. Yet they dared not mark time or let their younger rivals drive them off the field; they must hear new stuff, keep abreast of modern tendencies. And Czerniak and his group, whose works could only be properly heard in Vienna, were people the musical world had begun to take very seriously. So she had decided to hear them for herself, and as a detour to Friedrichsheim would add very little to the expense of the journey, to spend a few days there with Margarete Kirschner, once her fellow-pupil.

Was it chiefly pain or pleasure to find herself approaching Friedrichsheim, once more entering in the body upon the scenes of that pre-existence? She hardly knew; so constraining, she found, was still the spell of dear association, with such unforeseen swiftness it revived and took her captive. She had expected to be touched, but hardly to be shaken, by the gentle impact of that which so long had been a memory.

The breath of birch and pine that stole in while the train halted a moment, the melancholy cadence, thrice repeated, of the signal bell to which it moved on again, a yoke of oxen lumbering sedately towards a level crossing, and the wrinkled old peasant in a blue shirt at their side—what magic was in little unforgotten things such as these that they should seem timeless, more real than events? By contrast with them, the intervening years, her own career with its early honours, its present cares, even Europe's long agony of strife, not yet assuaged, appeared unsubstantial and remote.

And not only poetic association, things trivial and absurd had their share in evoking the past; the flavour of a cigar that drifted in from the corridor, the glimpse of the man's hand that held it, a fat white German hand, and of the broad wedding-ring embedded therein. So the husbands—and cigars—of the Fatherland were still heavy!

Surely Hugo Lindmann, who fell at Verdun, had smoked that very brand in the days when he and she used to make music together; he might have been standing out there now! But in order to believe it quite one must shut one's eyes, for his fingers had been lean and brown like his own violin. In the garden of just such a village inn as flashed by at that moment she and a group of her fellow-students, pianists for the most part, had discussed their art through a long sultry afternoon how many years ago?

And Rudi Keller, long since Kapellmeister at Hahnemund, had expounded his entire contempt for the romantic school in music, a contempt that grew hotter with each glass of ice-cold lager, till little Elsie Stimson, the shy, prim Bostonian, burst out: 'What about Schumann!' and dared him to belittle her idol. 'Hands off Carneval . . . Papillons . . . Kreisleriana! . . .' She had broken off almost crying. And Rudi wouldn't stop teasing, so the rest had pelted him with green apples, because they all liked poor Elsie, so pathetically keen, so unaware as yet of her own limitations.

Then Carl von Nostitz, to make peace, had suggested that he and his fiancée should sing a duet in canon form of his own devising, and in laughing at the composition they had all become friends again. And soon the talk had drifted as usual to von Riederhofen, the master, and the hero, of them all; his whims, his sallies, his sarcasm, his pithy words of praise. Then suddenly to their astonishment and delight, the man himself appeared, returning from a long, lonely tramp, and nothing loath to sit awhile with his pupils and a tankard of the Goldener Adler's beer for company. At last in the deep twilight they had sauntered back singing to the railway station.

So as the train flew onwards, the inhabitants of that vanished world once more lived and moved and had their being; forgotten faces crowded on Alma's inward eye, voices stilled in Death spoke again.

She had said to herself before leaving London that no emanation from the enchanted past should tempt her to disparage the achievement of her maturity. For that would be to prize the seed more highly than its fruits. Possessed of a name still honoured in the musical world she would look back tenderly, but with detachment, to her student days.

The tears that gathered in her eyes as she thought of them

implied no repining, no lapse from her chosen attitude. But they effectually blotted out the flying landscape; she turned her head away, and met with a faint shock the cool attentive gaze of the young girl opposite to her.

Till that moment Alma had been hardly conscious of the new-comer, and her personality now impinged with curious sharpness. A short, well-built English girl of nineteen or twenty, she pleased—if indeed she pleased, Alma was uncertain—not by good looks but by an indefinable air of competence and vitality. Her fair shingled head (she had tossed her hat into the rack) was trim and well shaped, her brown travelling-dress workmanlike; her smooth clear skin made amends for a rather wide snub nose. What beauty she possessed lived in her bright hazel eyes, but Alma found them a thought too observant and unabashed. She took exception, moreover, to the cherry colouring that gave artificial emphasis to the girl's sweet-tempered mouth.

Altogether the young person was such as one may meet any day in any large English town, and Alma would have fallen back into reverie but for the sight of the music that lay open on the girl's lap, and of the small powerful hands resting on it as though on a keyboard, the fingers furtively tapping. Upside-down though it was, Alma's practised eye quickly recognised the composition, a study by Stravinsky.

So the new-comer was a student of music, the lawful successor of the ghosts of thirty years ago! Alma smiled to herself, the coincidence moved her by its timeliness. It blended so perfectly with the moment, like the cigar smoke and the oxen and the country scents and sounds, and disposed her to feel indulgently towards the girl, as to a daughter setting out on a long and arduous road.

Yet she had no wish to make friends, for she feared to disturb, by however transient a ripple, the deep shining pool of memory. Even when presently the girl's hat fell out of the rack and as they both stooped to pick it up their two heads almost collided, though she smiled as she acknowledged its owner's laughing apology, it was with a certain dignity that did not invite advances.

The mistress of the hat, however, regarded the episode as an introduction, for leaning back and shutting up her book, she remarked confidently:

'It's no good—one can't concentrate in a train! But I always try to do some work about now, because this part of the journey's so dull.'

Dull ! Alma did not intend to be drawn into talk, or to be challenging in reply, but the stab of that epithet caught her unprepared.

'*Then you are not going to Friedrichsheim ?*' It was as though her own youth leapt up and put the enigmatic question.

'To Friedrichsheim ?' The girl stared. 'Not me ! I'm going to Munich.'

'And Munich isn't dull ?'

'Munich's heaven !' came the fervent answer.

There was silence between them once more, Alma gazing out of window, oblivious of the scrutiny directed to herself. Nothing very enlightening was to be found in that sharp-cut, handsome profile of hers, outwardly so calm ; a general impression of faded distinction, no more. It needed deeper insight than the bright hazel eyes possessed to discern emotion hidden behind such impassivity.

So this particular traveller was happy, eager to arrive, thought Alma, and why ? Surely not because she was hastening to an impatient swain, some commonplace youth of flesh and blood—Alma refused to believe anything so humdrum—but because at the other end of the journey there waited, open-armed, her art, that larger, more exacting love. And Munich was her Friedrichsheim.

Again the parallel came home to the elder woman, evoking this time, used though she was to budding musicians, an unusual response. The best of her own pupils stirred her hope, her pride ; the worst taught tolerance, and a generous appreciation of small results. But which of them had she ever envied ! It flashed upon Alma with a swift intuitive pang that this girl possessed abounding talent backed by strong purpose. She had it in her to go far. Then the parallel, the likeness in unlikeness to her own young self, was complete.

'Leave it at that ! Be wise. What have you to gain by talking ? There's a generation—a gulf—between us,' Alma said to herself, loath to desert the company of her ghosts for any fellow-traveller.

But her pride in the place and the man who had made her had been hurt, however unreasonably, by the failure of her reference to Friedrichsheim. Times change ; what was once a name to conjure with may soon or late be forgotten, she knew well ; yet she could not bear that for any musician, however callow, that dear word should suggest only a dull railway station.

'I see that you are musical,' she said at length, turning to her junior with a charming smile. 'And you're young! So you won't mind my telling you that years ago Friedrichsheim was a well-known musical centre. People came from far and wide to the Conservatoire. For one thing it was a first-rate school of the violin, but the supreme attraction was the great pianist, von Riederhofen. He lived there, and between his concert tours, which took him all over Europe, he used to teach just a few gifted folk.'

'Funny! I've never heard of him,' was the reply. 'Have any of his pupils got a name?'

The smile that had made Alma's face attractive, almost beautiful, faded.

'Quite a number of them are well known, though perhaps chiefly on the Continent,' she answered. 'Mancia for instance at Turin . . . de Chamel . . . Foster-Harbord. . .'

'Foster-Harbord!' interrupted the girl, eager to find a point of contact. 'Ah! I've heard *him*. Solid and rather stuffy, I thought him. Poor little chap! He did some Scriabine at the end of the recital, but it was quite pathetic—like an old maid getting into beach pyjamas because it's the thing. However, perhaps he was off his game that day. Does von—von ('Riederhofen,' interposed Alma) teach still?'

'He's dead——'

In spite of herself Alma's voice quivered as she said it. Her *vis-à-vis* had sharper ears than eyes; Alma saw in the girl's expression a suddenly quickened curiosity that set her on her guard. Speak to this fledgling, enlighten her, put her withal a little in her place, one needs must; but it should be done from a safe distance, and not in *propria persona*.

'If that's the impression Foster-Harbord made on you his playing must have utterly changed,' she said quietly. 'He's had a good deal of ill-health which may account for it. But as a younger man there was nothing of the old maid about him—far from it! He was full of fire and charm. I know that for a fact because a friend of mine studied under von Riederhofen—"Ried" everyone called him for short—for five years. She's told me a great deal about him.'

'Well: I suppose I ought to have heard of him, but when you're with a man like Hildebrand you don't think of anyone else, living or dead. He just dazzles you!'

'So you're studying with Hildebrand. Lucky woman! He's a



very great artist.' Alma was conscious of a little magnanimous glow as she paid her tribute.

'Marvellous, isn't he?' The girl's face beamed. 'It doesn't matter what he plays, it's all just like no one else! Sometimes I think the small things everyone knows are the most wonderful—things every child has strummed since the world began. I heard him do a *Lied ohne Worte* as an encore—Mendelssohn, just fancy! Of course only he would dare! It was like a primrose—the first one sees after the winter.'

('That's what people used to say of Ried's playing—he made everything new,' thought Alma). 'Well, you couldn't be in better hands than you are,' she said aloud. 'I shall look out for you, you're sure to be worth hearing. Or are you launched already and just going back to drink at the spring? I wonder if you would tell me your name? I may know it.'

'Ah! no! you don't—as yet,' she laughed disarmingly. 'It's plain Jill Hammond. Commonplace, isn't it? But who cares nowadays! I'll get to the top as Jill Hammond or not at all. Anyway, a name doesn't really help. . . . I'm not so sure about good looks.'

'Good looks never helped in the long run, at least with anyone whose judgment counts,' said Alma firmly. Had she not in her own heyday resented as irrelevant any allusion by the critics to her beauty?

'That's lucky for me!' responded Jill, and laughed again.

Perhaps her elder's emphatic assurance was not designed solely for her consolation; 'e'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.' But Alma was genuinely moved by the girl's *naïveté* and enthusiasm. Pity mingled with her envy of this vital creature. Did she know how hard is the way even for the young and greatly gifted? How they jostle each other nowadays, what a cold and tired world they are setting out to conquer? Possibly, thought Alma, from the stores of her own experience she might be useful to Jill Hammond, lightly drop words of counsel, save her a blunder, a heart-burning. . . . Alma's instinctive certainty that Jill was worthy of such confidence encouraged her to lift the veil between them.

'And when—and where—is the world first to hear you?' she enquired by way of opening.

'Next spring, if all's well. This is my last winter with Hildebrand. He's playing in London in May and I shall take the plunge there before he leaves. He'll sponsor me. After that anywhere—everywhere—wherever they want me.'

'And suppose, having made a good—even a brilliant—start, you should have to wait, can you afford it? Forgive my asking, my friend's career has made me interested in pianists.'

'Wait—for what? For riches?' asked Jill, smiling.

'For engagements.'

'I shan't have to wait. Hildebrand's sure of that! If I do, I'll live at home on crusts and work—and work. Whatever happens, I won't teach. I should loathe it!'

'My dear! You'll have to teach; no one in these days can live by concert-playing alone.' Alma spoke with unintentional sharpness.

'The biggest people don't teach,' returned Jill, unperturbed. 'Hildebrand doesn't, I'm the only pupil he's ever had. I think it's the refuge of failures . . . has-beens!'

The statement was absurd, and at any other time Alma would have laughed at it; instead she winced, and the kindliness that was stealing out to Jill shrank home and turned the key. Jill's confidence that had been so moving appeared merely arrogant, her frankness crude, her optimism shallow ignorance. Alma's face set, she turned once more to the beloved landscape, her lips obstinately closed.

Doubtless the girl's prestige as the only pupil of a great and famous player had somewhat turned her head; her wise elder was not unmindful of the fact. Yet it failed for the moment to win clemency for Jill. The desire to warn and enlighten, far from waning, grew imperative; no longer a charity, it appeared a plain duty to drive this young egoist out of her fool's paradise. Unsought, the pointed phrases leapt to Alma's mind, darts from an armoury lying unsuspected within.

'You may be—I fully believe you will prove to be—a very gifted new-comer, but remember, your distinction as Hildebrand's only pupil is blinding you to realities.' (Somewhat in this strain her homily should run.) 'You are isolated from the stream, living in a world of your own. . . . Do you realise that every Conservatoire in Europe is turning out gifted pianists, some of them potentially great players? . . . Do you realise that far more than talent, even than genius, is needed for lasting success nowadays? That the lesser man backed by capital and lavish advertisement often succeeds where the greater, relying purely on musicianship, fails? . . . Do you even know what it costs to hire a decent hall for one night? . . . Do you know that you may have had a fine career and be still at your best and yet find the young ones

treading hard on your heels—pushing you out? . . . Pupils! You turn up your nose at them. You'll live to jump at them, to lower your fees in order to keep them! The world's far poorer than it was, and there's the pianola, and the wireless and the gramophone . . . and young people won't work as they used. . . . Believe me, courage is one thing, over-confidence is quite another!'

'May I ask you something?' Jill's voice broke the silence, and Alma, looking round, saw that all unconscious of the rebuke to come the girl was scanning a suit-case in the rack opposite to her. The label bore in small type the words: 'Madame Alma Marchant,' the vaguely cosmopolitan cloak with which, thirty years and more ago, Alma had romanticised her forthright English name of Amy Martin.

'Are you—can you be—Madame Alma Marchant?' Jill enquired eagerly.

'I am,' was the cold reply.

'Then you were a pianist—I mean, you are?'

'I am.'

'Then a man I know heard you play in Glasgow a year or two ago.'

'Very likely. I've often played there. I live in the north,' replied Alma, praying only that she might be spared the comments of Jill's friend. But Jill for once showed discretion; she was not greatly interested in the niceties of her elder's performance.

'Fancy your being a pianist and my not guessing—you kept it very dark! And that label lurking up there all the time!' she exclaimed, and then with a smile that by its sweetness would have touched a sterner heart than Alma's, 'How wonderful to think you've been a concert-player for years. Tell me what it's like!' There was something wistful, almost childlike, in the appeal.

'I can't,' said Alma, and her voice shook, for an instant she covered her eyes with her hand.

For out there, a stone's-throw from the line, she had spied the veritable Golden Adler; at that moment they were passing it. And the sunflowers were ablaze in the garden as of old, and the gay carnation heads drooping over the window-ledges between the green shutters—and the tables set. All was as she remembered it, save that now the place was empty.

Had she vowed, secretly fearing the radiance of the long-ago, that she would not suffer it to turn to ashes the sober, anxious present? She had underrated its power to storm her defences.

Youth deposed and vanished, youth enthroned—her ghosts and Jill—together were too strong for them. Her heart cried out passionately for that which could never be again, April wrestled with Autumn. She shut her eyes and lay back, wholly lost in the sharp pain of their embrace.

The poignant moment passed, and the wave of emotion, receding, left her calmer and more benign. Life still was good, though now it sparkled no longer, her art still its abundant reward. The years had given much, once more she could acknowledge it, for that which they had taken away.

The Goldener Adler lay fully ten miles from Friedrichsheim; there was yet time to admonish Jill, only the desire to do so was passing. The glamour of the past still enfolded Alma, but tenderly and without bitterness. 'Leave it to life,' it whispered, 'to make this foolish young thing wise.'

What indeed was left of her own youth but the power to feel with youth? If she struck, however deservedly, would she not wound herself rather than Jill, loosen by that much the tie which bound her to the days that are no more? To hurt—to claw—merely because oneself is aching, the hateful prerogative of warped, embittered folk; might she always be too young for that! After all, Jill was returning for the last time to her heaven, never again could the thrill of approach be quite the same. Let her keep unshadowed those golden hours, that incomparable traveller's joy!

So the young Alma pleaded with the middle-aged woman, and meanwhile the express, slowing down, reached the outskirts of Friedrichsheim, the eccentric new suburbs that have grown up since the War. There was no time now to do more than make ready to get out. She had hardly collected her things, Jill helping, before it thundered into the station, clanked, halted, and she found herself scanning the long platform, crowded with waiting figures. Could that stout, white-haired woman in the check ulster be Margarete? Impossible!! Yes, it must be. . . . It was!

Alma waved to her friend, then turning back with a full heart and taking the girl's hand between both her own, 'My dear, I wish you every happiness,' she ventured in farewell. 'May you have a great career!'

Perhaps it was as well she had kept her darts; they might have glanced off their target.

For Jill's face lit up with pleasure but with invincible expectation. 'I'm sure I shall,' was all she said.

## *A NIMROD OF THE VOSGES.*

BY WILLIAM BLISS.

I HAD set out some days before to walk over the summits of the Vosges mountains from Abreschweiler to the Ballon d'Alsace. I had been walking, sometimes on the crest of the hills, sometimes across the lateral spurs, more or less following the frontier line between France and Germany (this was before the War) as it switchbacked up and down; walking indeed often in the actual line itself where, on the open hills, a continuous strip of turf was cut out and at every kilometre a stone was set with a great F. carved on one side of it for France and a great D. on the other side for Germany. But always I had made it a rule, when I was hungry in the middle of the day and when I was hungry and tired at night, to descend to eat and to drink and to sleep on the French and not on the German side, for I have had all my life, I have now and I shall continue to have till I die, what Charles Lamb would call an 'imperfect sympathy' with the German race, especially at table and when travelling.

On the particular day I have in mind, a little after eleven o'clock, and having then been walking since early morning along the crest of those hills which are called les Hautes Chaumes (or the Upland Stubbles)—a wonderful ridge little less than 2,000 feet high where, for miles and miles, all France lies open to you on your right (as you walk southwards) and on your left thick forest falls steeply away into what was then Germany—I began to consider where I should descend to find my midday meal and, a little ravine opening suddenly on my right (the French side), I dropped down into it and following the course of a mountain stream, which my map said was called Le Fossé and which was busy all the way turning the water-wheels of sawmills, I came after a few miles to the village of Moussesey.

I liked the name, the village was charmingly situated, closed about with wooded hills, at the confluence of my little torrent of le Fossé and the more considerable Rabodeau river; and when, on turning a corner, I saw an inn with a pictured sign like an English inn (an unusual thing in France) of an incredible stag painted a bright green and inscribed as the 'Hôtel du Cerf Volant'

I made no more ado but went straight in and asked for *déjeuner*. My instinct for inns has seldom led me astray, but never had I fallen so completely upon my feet as on this happy occasion.

They gave me—I remember every item of that *déjeuner*, what do I say?—it was more than a *déjeuner*, it was a banquet—they gave me a perfect omelette, they gave me trout from the river, not *au bleu* but *meunière* (and the original miller's wife herself could not have cooked them better), they gave me what I thought at first was the saddle of an enormous hare but which turned out to be, *incroyable dictu*! a saddle of roe-deer, they gave me a salad that seemed to have been compounded in Eden and a cheese that must have been made from the milk of the goats of Pan; and to drink with all this they gave me a bottle of a red Riesling wine which they told me was of the district and which had something of the taste and scent of a good hock but a character of its own, and which, though not sparkling (for no sparkling wine is of any real account), had yet in it a faint suggestion of ebullience as if it had not yet quite forgotten its youthful fermentation. When I was about half-way through this Lucullan feast the landlord came in to see how I was getting on and at my exclamations of praise and satisfaction went to fetch his wife and daughter, to whom he said the greater part of the credit was due (though he himself had shot the roe-deer), so that they too might hear my panegyric. You may suppose, therefore, that we all made friends very speedily; I begged them to drink with me, more wine was brought (more of the red Riesling, I did not want anything better) and we talked and exchanged confidences and laughter, and by the time I had done and was smoking a pipe and had given the landlord one of the few cigars I had brought with me from England, I had declared my intention of going no farther that day but of staying at the 'Cerf Volant' for at least another twenty-four hours.

After this great meal, in order to keep awake open air and gentle exercise were essential, and as I had a small trout rod with me I said I would go out and catch trout in the Rabodeau or the Fossé and the landlord said that, if I permitted, he would accompany me to see how the English caught trout. I found the Rabodeau, and still more the Fossé, so thicketed with bushes and so overhung with trees that to cast a fly was impossible, so I collected some grasshoppers in a match-box and out of most of the little pools that I could get at I managed to get a trout, and in about



an hour had eight or nine, none of them so much as half a pound. The landlord watched me with grave approval and as we walked back together, 'Yes,' he said, 'that is a very good way of catching trout—*très gentil*—for those who have the time and patience. For me, I catch them with a net, it is quicker, and put them in my tank to be ready when I want them; come, I will show you,' and he led me into the courtyard behind the inn, where was a large brick tank lined with cement and fed by a pipe with running water. I looked over into it and it was full of grey shadowy forms with gently moving tails. 'Which would you like for your supper?' he asked. 'See, there is a fat fellow,' and taking a small hand-net from the wall he leaned over and with conjuring dexterity whipped out the trout he had selected and held the net up for me to see.

'That is how I fish,' said he with a great laugh, 'for me it is the best way.'

At supper, which I ate with the family at my desire (I happened to be the only guest at the moment staying in the hotel), the landlord, who was a genial Frenchman of the Lyonnais, large and comfortably built but active and with a twinkling eye, led the conversation again to sport. 'You must not think,' he said, 'that because I fish trout with a net I am not what you English would call a sportsman. On the contrary, I adore shooting and hunting, and I am not the worst among the others with a gun. Is it not so?' and he appealed to his wife. 'For sure you are not,' she said, and to me, nodding her head, 'Edouard, my husband, is of the first flight as a marksman. No one in all this valley of the Rabodeau brings home so much game.'

I asked them what sort of game there was and he told me there was everything, partridges, pheasants, hares, rabbits, duck of all kinds in the lakes and ponds to the west, foxes and badgers, and as I had seen roe-deer in the woods, and sometimes from the great forests on the other side of the frontier red deer would stray and more often still wild boars would come over with their families and raid the swedes and the potato patches planted on the fringes or in the clearings of the woods.

'I have shot them all,' he said complacently, 'and later on, in the autumn and winter, we go out in a company for days together and have much pleasure. But now, in August and during the summer, I shoot only for the pot—and, because it is the simpler way, I shoot at night.'

I asked him how he did it and he began to tell me, but all at once—' *Tiens,*' he said, 'why not let me show you? To-night I want a bird or two. It is nearly the full moon. It will be light enough to start by nine o'clock. Will you come? Is it understood?'

I said it was and I should be delighted, and after supper—an excellent one of my little trouts and his bigger one and the cold meat of the roe-deer that was left and another salad and more of the Olympian cheese—we set out.

He offered me his spare gun, but I would not have it. 'No,' I said, 'you watched me fish, I will watch you shoot.'

We walked at first up the valley of the Rabodeau, past where the Fossé joined it, and turned up to the right into the woods where another mountain stream ran into it. We were now going east and the moon had risen in front of us and was riding half-way up the heavens a little to our right and peering through the trees and making blanched patterns on the mossy path. The night was very still. Presently the landlord touched my shoulder and waved me back. I stood where I was and watched him go softly forwards for a few yards, his gun half-lifted in his two hands and his head cocked and peering upwards. I followed his gaze and saw, silhouetted against the moonlight, the figure of a cock-pheasant roosting above his head. He raised his gun very gently to his shoulder and—blew the pheasant's head off! The body fell at his feet and he picked it up and stuffing it into his fringed hunting-bag came back to me smiling. 'One,' he said. 'A pheasant makes a good beginning.'

'When I am shooting for the pot,' he added as we went on together, 'I do not waste any cartridges. *A quoi bon?* Why should I?'

I confess I could not tell him, and after this first shock I deliberately set myself to see the matter from his point of view and to enter into the spirit of the thing.

It was a perfect night, and to be out in it in these moonlit woods of mysterious shadows was pleasure enough, and yet (blame me if you must; I cannot help it) the sense that I was doing, or at least conniving at and being privy to, something poaching and illicit, began to take hold of me and to add a savour to the beauty of the night. We went on through the woods in the dappled moonshine, climbing up the ravine towards the frontier, but in those woods the landlord shot no more sitting birds. Only, just

as we came out into a little clearing, a great white owl flew past from behind me like a ghost, so near that I felt the draught of his wings on my cheek, and the landlord had his gun up in a second and shot him dead before he had gone ten yards away.

I tried to persuade him that on the whole owls (except the little American owl) did more good than harm, but he would have none of it and I did not argue the matter because I was glad he had shown me that he did not always shoot sitting and could hit a bird on the wing as well as anyone. It was an extraordinarily quick shot (as it had to be) and a good one, for the moon makes queer shadows, and though I have never tried to hit a flying bird in moonlight I should suppose that it is not easy. We crossed the clearing and, turning north again, came to another wood, but drew it blank. Coming out of it and steering westwards—for we were, I could see now, making a round of the valley—we came upon a cultivated patch of oats and potatoes, and the landlord, picking up a large stone, hurled it into the middle of the potato haulms as far as he could throw it. Instantly there was a grunting and squealing and I could dimly see several black forms go blundering out from the other side of the field and make off to the woods.

‘I thought they might be there,’ he said; ‘that was Mr. and Mrs. Wild Boar and their family. It is a kindness to the poor owner to chase them away. No—it would be no good trying to shoot one. This gun would not kill but only make a boar angry, and if I shot a young one I should only wound it, and I have no dog, and it would not be pleasant to try to get a wounded pig when his father and mother are on the ground.’

Soon after this we turned left again through more woods and began to come back again towards Moussey on the other side of the valley. I need not describe it any more in detail, but in one of these woods on the way back the landlord shot two more sitting pheasants, this time, I regret to say, a cock and a hen on the same branch and with one shot—which pleased him mightily. But as if to redeem himself in my eyes—though I want you particularly to understand that he did not himself think this at all necessary nor was in the least conscious that anyone could possibly consider his ways unsportsmanlike—almost immediately afterwards, in an open piece of upland meadow in the full moonlight, he shot a hare that I had kicked up out of her form, almost before she could get into her stride, and shot her dead. There was nothing the matter with his shooting when he liked.

Once only he displayed any excitement. There was a rustling in the undergrowth and as he clutched my arm I thought I saw a sleek form slinking through the bushes, but I had the better view and before he could sight it it was gone and melted in the shadows. 'Was it a fox?' he asked with emotion, and when I said I thought it was, 'Ah!' he cried, 'I wish I had been a second quicker. Ah! if I could have seen him clear, for one second only, that sacred fox! accursed beast!' and he raised a clenched fist to the moon.

All the way back he was invoking curses upon *cette bête maudite*, and when I attempted to put in a good word for Reynard, 'What!' he almost shouted, 'a beast that comes treacherously at night and kills for the sake of killing and out of sheer devilment? Who bites off the heads of half a score of fowls or pheasants and leaves them there, a dirty murderer!'

Nothing could exceed his contempt for and indignation against a creature who bit off pheasants' heads in the night.

The next day when I was about to say good-bye we were so far advanced in friendship that I thought I might, without impertinence, ask him to enlighten me on a matter which I confess had been puzzling me ever since our night expedition.

'You will forgive me,' I said, 'if I seem curious, but tell me, how is it that you have the shooting over so large a tract of woods and country? We must have walked eight or nine miles last night. Is all the valley, or at least the shooting rights over it, your property? You must be a very rich man to afford it.' 'Not so rich as all that,' he replied, laughing. 'Listen. It is quite simple, I will explain it to you—I am, as perhaps you do not know, the *Maire* of this village and a man of some importance in the district.' I bowed. 'I am also,' he went on, 'what you would call a good fellow, I am popular with my neighbours.' 'That,' I said, 'is easily seen; I have experienced your kindness,' and I bowed again.

'You are very good,' he said, bowing in return and smiling. 'Now then, you see, it becomes very simple. The woods all about in these parts are communal, Government property. Early in every year the wood-cutting and the sporting rights (subject to certain rules) are put up to auction. Well then, as Mayor, I bid and my friends and neighbours do not bid much against me. So I have, as it were, first pick—and at no great cost. It is quite simple,' and his eyes twinkled.

'Ye-es,' I said, 'but even so, over so large a tract—the whole valley—it must come to something very considerable.'

'Ah! but you do not yet quite see,' he answered, taking hold of the lapel of my coat and his eyes twinkling more than ever. 'Listen. I do not bid for all the woods—oh! but no, no, no. I bid for ten arpents here in this wood and twenty in that and so on all around the valley. Very well, then—I am passing along from one of my properties to the next all the way, and though I am very careful—as you no doubt observed'—— and here his face took on an indescribable expression of innocent roguery—'to shoot only within my own boundaries, yet, after all, if I should inadvertently transgress a little—for how can I always be quite sure?——'

'Especially at night,' I murmured. 'Just so, especially at night'—and here he fairly chuckled—'why, who is to know or to complain or say anything about it? I think now you understand very well.'

I said I thought I did and we looked each other gravely in the face for a moment and then simultaneously burst out into shouts of laughter and went indoors (we had been talking in the doorway of the inn) and split a last bottle of the Riesling. He had completely debauched me, and to this day—and I don't care a hang about the morality of it—I entertain the liveliest feelings of affection and—yes, of respect—for my friend of a day, the Nimrod of the Vosges.

## CLOCKING ON!

BY W. F. WATSON.

It may be truly said that to-day the fundamental basis of the payment of wages is time, no matter whether the worker happens to be paid by the hour, day or week, or whether he is operating some payment by results system. This was not always the case. Before scientific mass production made its appearance some thirty-odd years ago, time did not seem to be very closely related to the payment of wages. We were paid by the hour, of course, the standard week being fifty-four hours. If we lost half-hours, or 'quarters,' the equivalent in wages was deducted from our pay envelopes, but time checking was very loose. In many shops, if a man 'knew the ropes,' he seldom lost time.

Six o'clock was the customary starting time, and most firms allowed at least five minutes' grace, of which the majority of workmen took the fullest possible advantage. They would loll about outside until the period of grace had expired, and if one was intrepid enough to attempt to walk in sooner, he was laughed and jeered at, and accused of trying to curry favour with the boss. When we did enter the gates, we just passed a check to the timekeeper, either by placing it in a slotted box, or by slinging it on his desk. It was ten minutes past the hour before we had all filed past, those arriving later would lose half an hour or an hour according to the custom of the firm. If a man did not turn up soon after half-past six or seven, as the case may be, he was shut out for a 'quarter,' i.e. till after breakfast.

If you 'knew' the timekeeper, however, that is to say, if you treated him to an occasional pint in the 'Helping Hand,' or if you 'dropped' him a few coppers on Saturday, you were pretty sure of a full week's wages no matter how many times you were late. It was often possible to 'square' the timekeeper if you had a day off, either on the booze or if unwell; indeed, many timekeepers considerably augmented their wages by levying toll from men who lost time! The same thing happened when resuming work after meal hours—five minutes' grace, and an additional five minutes before all had checked in. If a man was requested to work over-



time on an emergency job, well, he could, within limits, book in what time he liked. I have heard many stories of men who worked till nine, went home, returned at 5 a.m., and booked all through the night! If there was any complaint about the amount of work done, well, it's a poor mechanic who could not invent some plausible excuse to account for it!

Such a loose system of time checking was only made possible by two reasons. In the first place the office staff did not begin work until nine o'clock, and it was very unusual for foremen or managers to arrive at the works before breakfast. Secondly, the complete absence of any precise method of timing jobs: complex costing systems were practically unknown. A man got on with his job almost regardless of time.

For the same reasons, precious little work was done during the pre-breakfast period, or rather very little for the firm. The men would be busy enough—making private tools or gadgets for the home, or mashing the tea and preparing the kippers, bloaters, eggs and bacon for breakfast; or maybe making up the time-sheet for the previous day, very often the most difficult task of all. I know from practical experience!

'Got a bit o' pencil, Bill?' asks Fred, time-sheet in hand and scratching his head.

'Not a bit, Fred!' Bill searches his pockets. 'Blimey! That reminds me, I haven't made up my blinking time-sheet yet. What was I doing yesterday, Fred?'

'How the hell do I know! Think I'm blasted well watching you all day? Got something better to do.' Fred moves off in search of a pencil.

Having scrounged one from somewhere—maybe from the foreman's office!—he lays the sheet out on the bench or machine, and starts cudgelling his brain. He has nine and a half hours to account for.

'Let's see,' he muses, biting the pencil. 'There's that pump job . . . I was four hours on that, but it'll only stand three. Then that shaft ought to stand another couple of hours. Hi! Harry!' he shouts to a pal. 'What the hell's the number of your job?'

'For Christ's sake don't go and book any time on this job, Fred! I've "flogged" it enough already!' says Harry excitedly.

'Well, I've got three blinking hours to make up somehow, and they've got to go on some job or other . . . !'

'Don't shove it down on my job, any old how. Bung it down to tools,' replies Harry hopefully.

'Can't, Harry! Already got a couple of hours down to tools. Won't stand any more . . . I don't know . . . !'

'What about your own job, Fred? That'll stand another hour or two, won't it?'

'Strewth, no, Harry! I ain't half got some time booked on that job. Can't be done . . . won't stand it . . . I'll have to put it down to something . . . bleating nuisance . . . time-sheets . . . !'

Pretty well all of us are in the same predicament, and what with handling them with dirty fingers, and the smudges made by many erasures with a scrap of dirty rubber (I always endeavoured to keep mine reasonably clean) the sheets were in an indescribable—sometimes indecipherable—condition when collected by the office boy! There are still some shops where the employees book their time in this fashion; I suppose there will always be some firms untouched by modern methods!

The tightening up of time checking and job timing came with the advancement of machinery, the acceleration and cheapening of production, and the introduction of Taylor's system of scientific management. A system primarily designed to simplify and standardise all operations, prepare material and equipment, direct the flow of work, plan the sequence of operations and check performances against plans, and for the study of physical, mental and temperamental characteristics required in workers for any particular job, must be accompanied by a positive system of time checking. It was very soon discovered that the flow of work could only be effectively directed, and the sequence of operations properly planned by ensuring that every operator was always at his job at the right time. Each man's labour became more and more interdependent upon the labour of others.

The five minutes' grace when starting work was reduced to two, in extreme cases it was cut out altogether—and strictly adhered to. Foremen and charge-hands—sometimes the departmental managers—had to be on the job at the same time as the men, and later—when hours were reduced to fifty-one, and the one-break system (the elimination of the pre-breakfast starting time) was instituted, the office staff had to begin the day's work at the same time as the factory. The checking of time ceased to be entrusted to the gate-keeper; it became the work of the office staff. All this, of course,

made 'wangling' extremely difficult, which in itself promoted better timekeeping. Notices were posted warning us that if we were late more than once a week, we would be shut out for the day. This did not bother us a great deal at first. Very often a number of us would arrange to be late for the second time on Saturday. Then we would go somewhere and enjoy ourselves for the morning, returning at one o'clock for our pay envelopes. That sort of business was stopped by substituting the 'sack' for 'shut out for the day.' Charge-hands, foremen and chasers saw to it that we started work on time.

There was still something lacking. The mere passing of a brass check at the outer gate not only lent itself to many controversies as to whether a man was inside the gate at the precise moment, it also meant that men working in distant departments were five or ten minutes late in getting down to the job, in addition to which there was no accurate means of checking the actual time a man was on a given job. So some bright genius invented the automatic time-recording clock. We may, indeed we do—and in no uncertain language—curse the man, but one is bound to admit that such clocks are absolutely essential to modern production. They eventually stopped all quarrels about the time a man started, but not at first—oh dear, no! Trust some workmen for finding ways of 'wangling.'

The first time-recording clock—the Bundy Key Recorder—was introduced into this country from America in 1885. I came across it many years later when working for a firm in the City. Each employee had a numbered key which, when placed in the keyhole and given a quarter-turn, rang a bell, and printed on a paper scroll inside the clock the exact time against the man's number. I confess that we had some fun with that clock. When late, we made a pretence of turning the key, and when no record could be found on the scroll, we swore by all that was holy that the clock must be out of order.

It was one of those shops where each man made out his own time-sheet; we never thought of deducting the half-hours we lost, for the very simple reason that we knew that the clerk rarely compared the clock records with the sheets. But there were occasions when the boss took it into his head to walk round the shop, examine the time-sheets, and compare them with the clock scroll. He was a dear old chap, although we *did* call him 'Pig's Head,' but that was merely a term of endearment—he really did have a peculiarly shaped head!

'I say, Watson!' he remarked to me one morning. 'What time did you come in on Tuesday?'

'Seven o'clock, Mr. Reed!' I replied without hesitation, and without batting an eyelid. It was a one-break shop.

'H'm! The clock says that you did not come in until twenty minutes past seven!'

'Is that so, Mr. Reed?' I *was* surprised. 'Then, I must have made a mistake. Let me see . . .' pondering deeply, 'Tuesday . . . yes . . . that is so . . . I believe I *was* late on Tuesday. I'm awfully sorry . . .!'

'Well, you'd better alter your time-sheet.'

'Certainly, Mr. Reed!' I proceeded to make the necessary correction, but as soon as he was out of sight, I again altered it to seven o'clock. It went through all right.

Very wrong and dishonest of us? Well, perhaps it was! But I don't think the firm lost much. If we had nine and a half hours on the time-sheet, we had to do the equivalent amount of work, for most jobs were timed. We just slipped into it to make up for lost time. Moreover, a scheme of things in which every second of a man's working life is checked and recorded lends itself to deception and fraud. 'Wangling' the time is not so much a matter of fraud as man's resentment against all this very necessary timing and checking. It was really remarkable how the keys used to get lost!

'I say, Tom!' George would shout to the foreman. 'Where's my blinking key?'

'How the devil do I know where your key is!' Tom would be frightfully fed up. 'Ain't it on the ruddy board?'

'Now, would I ask you where it is if it was on the board?'

'Well, I don't know where the damn thing is!'

'It was on the board when I went home last night, because I clocked off.'

The loss would be reported to the office, and the man would be given another key with a different number, or a new key would have to be specially made. Firms tried to circumvent this practice by insisting upon a two-shilling deposit on the key, which each man had to pay when starting, but still they disappeared. Although the Bundy is still on the market, it is not in common use, not in factories, at any rate.

The Day Time Register, now known as the International Dial Recorder, was the next type of clock to be put on the market, in 1892. It is quite a distinctive affair. Round the timepiece is

a big dial, in the rim of which are numbered holes about half an inch apart. Swinging from the centre is an arm, fixed to the axle of a drum inside the clock. At the end of the arm is a plunger. The workman takes hold of the knob of the plunger, swings the arm until the plunger is opposite the hole bearing his number, sharply presses the knob, the plunger enters the hole, and the exact time is printed against the man's number on the scroll round the drum. It was not very difficult to manipulate the early Dey registers. We found ways and means of placing that drum just where we wanted it, so that we could clock back, or we deliberately over-stamped, making a blur of figures instead of a clear record.

It is justifiably claimed that no such monkey tricks can be played with the latest Dey model—it is quite 'wangle'-proof. Indeed, it is almost human in the way it correctly places the records of a man's comings and goings, automatically registering the information without being set to any prearranged schedule. It does not matter how irregular the times, nor how often they may be changed, the clock registers the records in their proper order on the time-sheet round the drum without any over-stamping, confusion or error. The time-sheets may be printed to suit any employer, allowing for any number of 'in' and 'out' records a day, and with wage analysis columns, providing for normal times, overtime, rates of pay, insurance deductions, net amount payable; in fact, there is no limit to the number of analysis columns that may be printed to form part of the sheet itself, or printed separately to attach to the time-sheet. By using a two-colour ribbon, the clerk can detect irregular clocking at a glance. Ordinary times are printed in blue; red records indicate lost time and overtime, and the wages clerk cannot avoid seeing 'red.'

The card time recorder seems to be the most popular clock, probably because of its adaptability for both time and job recording, and because of the convenience of the separate card. The first of its kind was the Rochester, but there are now very many varieties in use. The time or job card is placed in a pocket fixed in front of the timepiece, and by pressing a lever, the time is printed on the card. A small lever or knob (according to the pattern) enables the card pocket to be moved to correspond with the 'in' and 'out,' and 'a.m.' and 'p.m.' columns on the card, and the card pocket automatically rises every twenty-four hours to correspond with the daily divisions. Early card clocks registered time only, which made it comparatively easy to manipulate cards and levers so that one

could stamp the card anywhere. Many an astute workman has 'pinched' a day in this fashion. The up-to-date International Card Recorder prints the day of the week, as well as the time of the day in properly arranged and immutable 'a.m.' and 'p.m.' divisions, and the only way in which they can be 'wangled,' is by clocking on for each other by prearrangement, a practice prevalent years ago, but practically impossible in these days of scientific management.

It still goes on, however, in those small shops where the boss does not trouble to come in until some time after the scheduled starting time. I worked in such a one not so long ago. At eight o'clock there would be a group round the clock, watching the minutes fly, and discussing the latest news. Two minutes was the limit of tolerance. As the hand was on the stroke, George would be seen flying down the yard. Somebody would rush to the clock, snatch George's card from the rack, jamb it in the pocket and bomp the lever. Too late! The clock says 8-3. Whereupon George lets fly.

'That ruddy clock's fast! Look here, my watch says eight. . . . Blast it . . . I'm not going to lose the half-hour . . . I'll see the old man about it . . . !'

An obliging shop-boy used to clock on for late-comers until it was rumbled by the old man, who took steps to stop it. But very often, the youth who had the keys was himself late. This little difficulty was overcome by shoving the clock back until we had all registered! Few of us lost any time at that shop. But we had to get the work done—I'm quite certain the firm did not miss the few minutes.

Modern industry demands punctuality in the office, as well as in the factory, the clerks are far too respectable to be expected to use the same type of recorder as the manual workers, so an Autograph Time Recorder was devised for their benefit. In front of the clock is a space for the signature. By pressing a lever the scroll is moved a certain distance and the time printed. The signature is then placed opposite the record, which is protected by a shutter the moment the handle is released; this renders manipulation difficult.

A very ingenious device is the Ticketograph, specially designed for checking the progress of work with many operations and passing through many hands. It imprints on cards perforated into coupons, the order and production numbers, the quantity, style and price or cost of each operation, and the total cost of the component. When



the correct number of the particular operation is completed, the coupons are detached and slipped into a wallet made for the purpose. The workman is thus relieved of the necessity of keeping records in a book, and the costs department has an accurate analysis of the job from start to finish.

Then there is an electric time-stamp which simultaneously prints in one line, the month, day, hour (a.m. or p.m.), minute, and year of grace, and it can be automatically set for long and short months, and for Leap year !

In big establishments where there are numerous departments, there may be as many as a hundred clocks dotted about all over the plant. At one time, when each clock was a separate unit, a man was detailed to keep them in order, but such a system is not positive enough for modern requirements. Nowadays, all clocks can be controlled by a self-supervising master clock (60 beat, and with Graham deadbeat escapement), which, being also equipped with a mercurial pendulum, is the last word in timekeeping precision. This master clock drives all the other clocks, to which it is electrically connected, by regular minute impulses, and simultaneously synchronises each one every hour.

By the courtesy of the manager of the head office in London of the International Time Recorder Company, I was able to see this fully demonstrated. Eight separate clocks were set at different times, some slow, others fast, some right. When the minute hand of the fast ones touched two minutes to the hour, they just stopped until the master clock caught them up, and at precisely two minutes to the hour, the slow clocks automatically accelerated—the correct ones going on as usual—until at the hour, every clock became identical, and normality was resumed. It was really uncanny to watch them. Buzzers and bells are also controlled by the master clock, so that every shop may have its separate signal for starting and stopping, all operating together.

Thus, by precision timing devices, every second of a man's working life is timed and checked, and must be accounted for. He clocks on as soon as he arrives and then clocks on the job. He clocks out again at meal times and in again for the afternoon, out at night, in again if working overtime, out again when finished. He must clock on and off every job—every operation, which may mean many additional clockings during the day. Clocking, clocking, clocking . . . !

These devices are no doubt marvels of human ingenuity and

mechanical precision, but it is melancholy to reflect that the same ingenuity is not concentrated on devising a system of production wherein such precise timing and checking of a man's life will be unnecessary.

One can almost tell a man's habits, if not his character, by the way he clocks on! Let us take our stand at the gate of any big factory, half an hour before starting time. At about twenty minutes to eight, a few stragglers will be seen leisurely strolling in the gate. These are the men who like to take things easy—the 'never-been-late-for-ninety-years' type we often read about in the Press. Some wend their way to the mess-room for a cup of tea or coffee: others go straight into the shop, clock on, don overalls, and sit on a box, or the bench, and read the paper. As the minutes pass the number approaching the works increases—so does the pace. It becomes a fairly sharp walk. This group says, 'Well, we've got to get in to time—it's a mug's game to be late and lose time . . . but we're not giving 'em anything . . . !'

The shrill blast of the 'five-minutes-to' hooter quickens the pace, especially of those whose shop is some distance from the gate. Then it becomes a bit of a rush, the men step it out, glancing at their watches the while. One minute to eight. Down the road come the laggards—crowds of them, almost running. This is a mixed mob. Some have overslept, but for the most part they are the 'always-get-there-on-the-stroke' type. 'How much does it want, mate?' they breathlessly enquire of each other. 'Blimey! There goes the second hooter, we'll never do it!'

Now come the regular 'leave-it-till-the-last' merchants. Some are running, others walking very fast and trying to make it appear that they don't care how it goes. 'Buck up, Jack!' yells Tom as he flies past. 'You'll "do it in . . ."' 'Damn the ruddy hooter!' is all the thanks Tom gets from Jack, who is a man with the iron of bitterness against factory life in his soul. 'I'm not going to run to any blinking job . . . !'

The gatekeeper slowly begins to shut the gate. In they come helter-skelter, making it very difficult to shut the gate. Up the yard to the shops, up the stairs, two at a time, pushing everybody aside. 'Come out of it, blast you . . . I shall miss it . . . !' It is one minute past, and there is a queue of about twenty waiting to register. 'Get a move on, in front there, for cripe's sake. D'you want us to lose a ruddy half-hour . . . !'

Hang it! In the excitement, Jim has dropped his card, and

there is a lovely flow of language. Reflections are cast upon the probity of the culprit's parents . . . !

The hand is on the second minute, the clerk is just about to close the card racks. Here come a couple, flying into the shop at a furious pace. Snatching the card from the rack, they simply hurl it into the clock, and biff the lever. Snatching it out again they examine it. The first man is just 'in' and he looks exultant as he exclaims, 'Just done it, Frank!' As the second one presses the lever, there is an ominous click, the hand has passed the limit. 'Blimey, George! I've just missed it. . . .' The language is unprintable. 'You might have hurried up, George. I reckon I should have managed it if you hadn't been such a blinking long time . . . !' 'Shut up, Frank! I couldn't be no quicker, could I?' 'I'll bet a quid that ruddy clock's fast. My watch says it wants half a minute yet. I'll see Peter about it . . . !'

But it's little use seeing the foreman, there is the time clearly recorded on the card—there is no appeal against it. Frank loses the half-hour. Just before half-past eight there is a minor rush of late-comers. The clerk is waiting. As the two-minutes' limit is reached, he takes the cards from the rack. 'Half a minute!' bawls Bert, leaping up the stairs all hot and bothered. 'Too late, Bert!' we all shout. The clerk obligingly hands him his card. In the pocket it goes, bang goes the lever. All to no purpose; the inexorable clock has registered eight-thirty-three. Bert curses—he is shut out for the day. . . .

The clerk locks the card racks and departs. Clocking on is finished for that morning. . . .

### THE EYES OF THE MOOR.

SIR JAMES EVESHAM took one hand off the steering-wheel and waved it at the landscape. 'Over there to your left across the ravine,' he said, 'is the Black Wood; the grouse-moor begins beyond that on the plateau we call the Flats (you can see it from here), and the big hill is Carn Dubh. There should be deer in the corrie beyond with this wind.'

His guest glanced at the wood and said, 'Very fine,' indifferently.

Sir James was proud of his wood with its ancient descendants of the old Caledonian forest, and was irritated. This man Roper wasn't bad in London and he had certainly been useful in business, but when he had given him a general invitation to look in at the shooting-lodge any time he was in the Highlands he had not exactly expected to be wired to and asked to put the man up for several days. Awkward in the stalking season too, with such a small acreage; there was only one decent beat and his own young people wanted all the days they could get. The big stags from the forests did not usually come in to his land till the end of September, unless it was very cold, and October the 12th was the closing day. He had had to give Roper a day; the man had been talking last night about stags he had grassed years ago (he didn't look as if he would be much good on the hill now—too large and flabby) and he had actually been to some place where they still drove deer and wounded as many as they killed. No, Sir James was not too happy with his guest.

They had crossed the burn beyond the ravine now and were climbing up the narrow winding road on to the Flats. Carn Dubh's steep face, blue grey and featureless in shadow, swept up above the birchwood to their right. There was a stiff chilly breeze and a few clouds sailed across the pale blue sky. A good day for stalking. Sir James wondered what John Scott, the head-keeper and stalker, sitting in the back of the car, was thinking about his charge. He felt sure John would not approve of that too new and beautifully pressed suit. And his approval was generally sought after; timid guests who had not gained it—shot grouse very badly or missed a stag—had been seen walking back from the scene of the disaster many paces behind John, in a deep silence and with bowed heads.

Roper was talking about the stock market now, but Sir James interrupted him as they came to a turn in the road and pointed out two curious little tarns out on the flats to their left. They seemed two perfect circles, exactly alike and close together. 'We call those "The Eyes of the Moor,"' he said. 'They have a Gaelic name but I won't attempt to pronounce it. The local ghillies and shepherds won't go near them after dusk; there's something "no canny" about them. John Scott doesn't pay any attention, but then he was born and brought up in the lowlands. But there is something odd about them; they never freeze.'

John Scott was looking at the Eyes. 'There's a stag in the heather there,' he said. 'It'll be the one-horned switch.'

Roper could see nothing, but suddenly the stag got up and moved towards the road, finally crossing it not a hundred yards in front of the car. He wasn't much of a beast, and looked like a slightly lop-sided unicorn with his one smooth straight horn.

'Why don't you shoot it and get it off the ground?' asked Roper; 'it's no good.'

'We don't shoot that stag,' replied Sir James; 'he belongs to the moor and often lies between the eyes, and he grows his one horn every year. They say here that he's our luck. I'm not generally superstitious but I wouldn't like him shot.'

Roper snorted unpleasantly, but said nothing as they drove up to the end of the road where the pony hut stood beside a small and very rocky burn that had cut its way through the saddle between Carn Dubh and a lower hill to the east. Donald, the ghillie, and the pony were already there. Roper and John got out and Sir James turned the car. 'No use coming back for you,' he said; 'you might finish up anywhere, so you'll have to get home by yourselves. I hope you'll have a good day.'

John started off up the narrow track beside the burn. There were steep banks on either side, up one of which he presently scrambled, followed by Roper. He settled himself just below the top and took out his glass and began to spy for deer. In front of them Carn Dubh's gentler southern slopes led down to a saddle and then on the left came a long and very high ridge with a precipitous face tumbling down to the big corrie. Further round to the east the bordering hills were bare and almost featureless. The whole corrie was curiously desolate, seamed by water-courses and looking like an old wrinkled skin. There was not a tree anywhere.

John was staring in front of him at the face of the hill below

the saddle. Roper took out his field-glasses and looked in the same direction. He could see nothing for some time but rocks and heather, but at last made out some brownish shapes, one or two of which were moving.

'Is there a stag in that lot?' he asked John.

'Yes, there's a beast lying doon; you can see his grey face. Not much of a head; eight points I think, but narrow.'

John shifted his gaze and took in the whole of the corrie at great length and without speaking a word. Roper was getting thoroughly impatient when he said at last, 'There's a big stag on the high ridge there—Carn Garbh. Right on the skyline. We would need to go to the far end of the corrie, keeping well doon in the burn while we can; there are hinds on the face of Carn Garbh.' He looked at Roper for a moment, evidently considering his powers of endurance. 'We would have a long crawl and then a climb up yon far steep bit nearly to the highest point.'

Roper looked at the far steep bit (it was very steep indeed) and at the site of the proposed long crawl. Then he looked at the eight-pointer lying below the saddle in front of them.

'We might try this near stag,' said John, who had been watching his expression.

'Right,' said Roper, brightening. 'Go ahead.'

John however backed cautiously down the bank till the deer were out of view. Roper followed and they scrambled down and went back along the track till they came to a tributary burn in a gully of its own, up which they turned. Presently as the banks lowered, they had to walk with bent knees and backs, a most painful performance for Roper, who longed to straighten up. When John dropped to his hands and knees it was a positive relief, even though they were crawling mainly through black mud varied by very cold water. Roper had a splendid view of the nail patterns on John's shoe-soles. He supposed he must have enjoyed this sort of thing years ago—or perhaps it was merely in retrospect. He had not realised he had aged quite so much; after all, he wasn't fifty yet.

The gully was ending and John wormed his way on to the heather and did a flat crawl very difficult for a bulky man to imitate. He turned round once and frowned at Roper's too elevated back view. Presently they came to a great rock and Roper was allowed to sit up and recover while John gazed round its edge. He remained there twenty solid minutes while Roper



wondered where the deer were. He had no idea whether they were near or a long way off, being by now thoroughly confused about their position and his own. Then John crawled towards him and whispered, 'The stag's lying doon, we'll need to wait.' After this there was an apparently interminable pause. John took the rifle out of its case and watched from the rock side; Roper was longing to get the shot over, and his legs and feet were a cold damp mess; lucky it had been dry lately and the heather was all right to sit on.

At long last John beckoned to Roper, half stood up, took off his cap and laid it on the rock and the rifle on top of it. Roper took hold of the rifle and peered over. There was the stag, standing broadside on, not much more than a hundred yards away—a beautiful shot. He settled himself comfortably and squeezed the trigger. The stag gave a convulsive leap and ran thirty yards or so, then fell.

'You've got him, he's stone dead!' cried John, smiling for the first time that morning.

They went up to the dead beast: certainly not much of a head, far too narrow. An average weight probably. John proceeded to the gralloch while Roper sat down out of the wind and smoked a cigarette. He suddenly wasn't feeling tired at all; anyway, stalking was ridiculously easy; why people made such a fuss about it he couldn't think. He used to be a pretty good shot in the old days and he evidently hadn't lost his skill. A pity about that head; he must get something better than that before the day was over—that is, if they had anything worth shooting in this silly little place.

Presently he heard a stag roaring somewhere above, beyond the saddle; and when John joined him, he suggested going after it. John, who was evidently still feeling genial, agreed almost with enthusiasm. They climbed up to the saddle and past a little reed-grown loch that lay right in the middle of it, and went cautiously down beyond, John leaning back to the slope of the hill. Roper, following, could see no deer, but the view was magnificent: miles of hills with the blue cloud shadows sweeping over them and the big loch far below, of an almost incredibly darker blue. It was most unpleasantly chilly in that wind, however, and he was beginning to have quite enough of the view when John began to crawl once more and his shoe-soles became the main objects in the landscape. After some time he stopped and stared through his

glass again. The stag had been roaring at intervals and was apparently now not so very far away. 'Huh!' snorted John disgustedly, 'he's no worth shooting! We'll go up over the shoulder of Carn Dubh and eat lunch on the far side out o' the wind; there may be deer below.'

It was a tremendously long and (to Roper) most exhausting pull up to the shoulder, and he wanted his lunch. At least, what he really wanted was something rich and hot, preferably with champagne; he was not looking forward very much to eating the contents of that small package that his host had told him to stuff into his pocket. However, the other pocket had his flask in it, which was one comfort.

They were up on the shoulder at last and found a moderately sheltered place on the far side. The hill here went almost sheer down to where, a thousand feet below, the Flats stretched away to the Black Wood, with the loch beyond, and then all the hills to a very far range with snow on its high tops. A big cloud had spread its shadow over Carn Dubh and all the country below; the two little tarns gleamed out of it as if the moor were watching for something. Roper shivered suddenly and felt somehow uneasy. Then he took the small package from his pocket and ate his lunch as fast as he could, to get it over and get out of the cold. John ate too, in the intervals of scanning the entire landscape with his glass as if he intended to stalk anywhere from there to the horizon. He certainly was not a communicative person, and when Roper tried to draw him about the local superstitions and the one-horned stag, he had no more to say than Sir James, and then changed the subject and began to talk about the past grouse season.

Roper had just taken a good pull from his flask when John suddenly pointed downwards and said, 'Look; below!' And there was a string of deer running out from under the curve of the hill, hinds first and then a really big stag with a smaller one behind him.

John looked at them for a few moments and then put away his glass. 'Yon's a very good ten-pointer and the one-horned switch is with him,' he said. 'Something's put them off; they're making up the hill; I think they'll cross the top beyond the cairn; we'll get a shot if we hurry.'

He scrambled up to the shoulder again and began to run along the far side of the ridge, back and knees bent, almost doubled up. Roper imitated him as well as he could; the sandwiches and whisky

seemed unlikely to digest well in that attitude ; his back began to ache, his legs ached, he was panting violently, and the ground was all rocks. At last they were past the cairn ; scrambled somehow down a gully and up the other side ; John was taking the rifle out of its case as he ran. Roper was feeling that in another moment he would fall down and never move again when John dropped to his hands and knees and crawled up to some rocks which hid the further part of the ridge from view. He beckoned to Roper to hurry and gave him the rifle. Roper squeezed himself in between two of the rocks and saw the first of the hinds appearing on the skyline. He tried to get into a comfortable position, but it didn't seem to be possible ; sweat was running down his face and the muzzle of his rifle refused to keep still. Very soon came the two stags and John whispered : ' It's the first one ; take him now.'

Roper tried to get a steady sight but it was no good, so he pulled the trigger at what he thought was a hopeful moment. The big stag ran steadily on and disappeared down the hill ; the second one half fell, struggled up again, and went slowly away in the same direction. Roper had another shot at him, but missed, and he too disappeared.

' You've wounded the switch,' said John's accusing voice ; ' he's hit far back ; he'll maybe go for miles ; we must go after him.'

But Roper had had quite enough of those hills ; he felt extremely tired and even more extremely annoyed at not getting the big stag. If the deer had been making in the direction of the lodge it would have been all right, but they had vanished down the far side of Carn Dubh and he was certainly not going to follow. The big stag would be miles away in a very short time, and unless they could find another good beast on the way home he would have to do without that good head he had been so keen on getting. Anyway, if there was a chance of anything in the right direction they had better start now.

John was striding off after the stags, but Roper called out : ' I'm not going down there ; we'll never get a chance at the big stag and I want to try for something on the home side.'

John stopped and stared at him. ' You can't leave the wounded beast,' he said.

' Oh ! I don't suppose we should catch up with it,' said Roper, ' and, anyway, I shall have had more than enough by the time we get back.'

'Very well, I'll go after it myself; you can't miss your way; the road's below there.'

'And what about the rifle? Not very amusing if I see a good stag on the way back and have nothing to shoot it with.' Roper was angry. All this confounded fuss about that useless switch. 'Either you come with me with the rifle,' he said, 'or I'll carry it myself and do my own stalking.' (Lucky it wasn't one of those heavy double-barrelled affairs, but a .256 Mannlicher, not much of a weight.)

John silently thrust the rifle and some cartridges at Roper and then, muttering something about the pony and the stag killed that morning, turned and marched away along the ridge, even his back somehow expressing extreme disapproval.

Roper was feeling thoroughly chilled again; the wind was piercing and there were many more clouds, some of them quite low. He too would have to go back along the ridge; it was far too steep there to get down direct to the road. He made his way slowly towards where they had lunched, wishing he had not missed that stag, but telling himself he had every excuse for doing so, and going over the events of the last hour in his mind. He still felt quite justified in not following the switch; after all, there might be something worth having on the home side of Carn Dubh or perhaps on the Flats or the edge of the wood, and the stalk might take almost any time and the light wouldn't last for ever. Most unreasonable, the way John Scott had behaved; it would teach him a lesson if he (Roper) got something on his own. John, like all his kind, probably thought he was indispensable.

Roper had got beyond their lunching-place by now, and decided that the slope was manageable. It was still very steep, however, and the rifle banged most uncomfortably against his back at every step. But he got down at last and made across the heather and peat-hags to where Carn Dubh cast its great shadow across the road. There was a small cloud clinging oddly to the hill's steep face, and as he entered the shadow, the cloud rolled down and he suddenly found himself in a dark chilly mist. He could see nothing but the Eyes of the Moor gleaming faintly. He stopped and stared at them. There was something wrong; for a moment he could not think what it was. Then he realised that, lying out on the Flats and not very far below him, they ought to appear oval. They were not oval, they were perfectly circular. It wasn't possible—but they were no longer horizontal—they were glaring at him—

they were getting larger. He fumbled for his rifle, gave it up, screamed and tried to turn, but the Eyes held him—drew him; he began to run—*forward*. . . .

The sun was setting when John and Donald, with the pony and the eight-pointer stag, came down the road under Carn Dubh. The wind had died and the sky was dappled with blood-red clouds. John as usual was keeping a sharp look-out for deer, which he was quite capable of seeing in a light which to the ordinary person would be practically no light at all. Suddenly he put up his hand and whispered to Donald, 'There's something doon there between the Eyes; maybe that switch got back there after all. I'll go and see.'

'You can't do that, John, it'll no be safe,' said Donald.

'Pack o' nonsense,' answered John; 'I'm going; the pony'll keep you company.'

The shape lying between the tarns did not move as John went up to it. It was Roper, stone dead.

The one-horned switch was found next day where it had died up in the corrie with its head towards the Eyes of the Moor.

JOYCE KILBURN.

## *AMERICA IN DEPRESSION.*

### *SOME PROBLEMS.*

BY CARYL HARGREAVES.

A VISIT to the United States at the present time is both heartening and disheartening to an Englishman. Heartening because England is in so much better shape than they are : disheartening because they seem to be making no progress towards recovery, without which our better shape, in the long run, avails us nothing.

If you are lucky enough to have been there before, and to have some friends, you soon hear how bad things are. But superficially, on arrival in New York, things seem to be going on much the same as usual. There is the same crowd on the sidewalks, and the same crush of traffic. All the eating-places, even the expensive restaurants, seem pretty full, and their partial emptiness is more than accounted for by the enormous increase in the number of speakeasies, i.e. places where you can buy liquor. In the streets between West Fortieth and West Fiftieth almost every house as far as Seventh Avenue (and not a few in the East 40s too) seems to have become a speak-easy. Many of them sell food ; some are merely restaurants where you might be in Europe. In some cases the elaborate formula of knocking at the door and being looked at to see whether you are known and safe to admit is dispensed with, and you merely walk in and order your dinner and, at the same time, any kind of liquor you require. Nevertheless, on these occasions, there is a good deal of scrutiny of you going on, and unless the result were satisfactory, you would probably find it hard to get exactly what you wanted. There are, of course, still many speakeasies where the peephole business is yet in force : but the fact remains that the speakeasies in New York are to-day reckoned in many thousands. Admittedly New York is a notoriously wet State ; but there has been the most surprising change of opinion about Prohibition in the last three years.

This altered view-point is chiefly due to the realisation by an impoverished public that, if the sale of liquor were legal, the Government could put a very high tax on it, and still it would be considerably cheaper than at present. By this tax the revenue would benefit to the extent of many millions. For instance, the



difference between the price of a bottle of whisky at a Scottish distillery out of bond and the price of the same bottle when delivered at your house in New York is something like seven dollars. When you think of the amount of whisky drunk in America, it is no wonder that the hard-hit taxpayer should prefer the Government to take the profit instead of the bootlegger.

The result has been a great movement in favour of the repeal of Prohibition. Many people think that it will be settled in favour of repeal at the election this year, but that is, in my opinion, a case of the wish being father to the thought. It might very easily be achieved at the election in 1936. The women particularly are organising for repeal and, while I was in New York, a large convention of Anti-prohibitionists, mostly women, was held at the 'Commodore Hotel.' Everywhere in the streets you see men selling 'number plates' with an orange background on which is written in black, 'Repeal the 18th Amendment.' A large number of the cars one sees have these fixed on above or below the necessary number plates.

Many people, rightly or wrongly, attribute the great increase in crime to prohibition, and this is also an additional incentive to repeal. This idea has been much helped by the Lindbergh baby case, which has shocked, horrified, and enraged all thinking people in America. Now, however that the baby has been found the tendency seems to be more towards criticism of Lindbergh and the Administration for the way in which they handled the case. At any rate, as far as one can yet see, nothing has been done to prevent the committal of a similar crime. This is perhaps because the necessary measures would have to be so drastic that they would need the force of a very strong public opinion behind them, and public opinion does not exist in the United States. How else can we account for the prolonged tolerance of crime, of inefficient Government, of graft, to mention a few of their outstanding problems? No country in which there was any real public opinion would stand such impositions for more than a year or two. But my best-informed friends in America do not even envisage the possibility of abolishing these abuses. They only say, 'No, I don't think you will ever do away with graft in New York City. If the Tammany Boss is a really strong man, graft is reduced to smaller proportions, and that is the best we can hope for.' To an Englishman it seems a counsel of despair, but the American takes it as a matter of course.

But all this, except the inefficiency of the Government, has very

little to do with the despondency that fills every home in the United States. Primarily it is financial, but it extends to despair about the future of the nation. While everybody is suffering acutely from loss of income, Congress plays ducks and drakes with the national finances. Refusing to pass the taxes proposed in the first instance by the Treasury, this body has eventually agreed to a set of hastily improvised and probably unsound taxes which, while balancing the Budget on paper, nobody thinks will do so in fact. With such unsound national finance there can be no real recovery.

In addition there are the millions of unemployed for whom no provision has been made, and with whom charity is no longer able to cope. Then there is the army of War Veterans who have marched to Washington announcing that they will stay there until the Government grants them a bonus of \$2,000,000. They have already been paid thousands of millions in bonuses, but Congress does not seem strong enough to refuse this new demand, which simply means inflation. No wonder then that the average citizen looks at the future with dismay. His income has already been reduced to the vanishing-point—literally so in a number of cases: he does not feel sure that any of the concerns which have up to now continued to pay dividends will do so in future: and if his much-reduced income is to be inflated away, he feels that the end is really come.

The first thing the visitor hears is stories of the poverty of other friends. One of the first I heard was from a banker in one of the big banks. The day before he had met a man who, three years ago, was one of their large clients. He had told my banker friend that he did not know where his next meal was to come from, and he evidently spoke the truth. In my search for information, I repeated this to several of my friends, whose only comment was, 'Well, that's not by any means an isolated instance.' Another banker stated that for every man who had twenty millions three years ago, he did not think you could find one who had one million to-day. Similar tragedies, together with stories of people who have apartments (i.e. flats) on lease, and cannot pay the rent, form the chief topic of conversation at any luncheon or dinner-party. The mere cutting down of one's way of living has happened to everyone, and is therefore such a commonplace that it is not worth relating. As the result, only stories of the worst misfortunes are told and these increase the gloom at compound interest.

Let me hastily add here that the traditional American hospitality for the British has in no way altered. I do not wish to suggest that they allow their gloom to interfere with their being the most charming hosts. The only thing that they do not seem to have cut down is their welcome to friends from abroad. There is nothing they will not do on these occasions, and indeed, knowing how hard hit they all are, one feels almost ashamed of being the cause of so much spending. But it is extremely pleasant for the visitor, as, even in all their adversity, no people begin to know how to entertain one as do the inhabitants of North America. It is a lesson that we could learn with advantage in this country.

If we search for a brighter side to the picture, we discover that there are one or two ways in which the householder has found relief. For instance, the price of food has come down by 30 per cent., because the distracted housekeeper at last refused to pay the graft any longer. And of course, people do not expect so much. One way in which many of those living in New York itself have been able to economise without undue discomfort is by not keeping a car. To keep a car and chauffeur in New York in prosperous times very likely cost nearly £1,000 a year, and as taxis are about as cheap as in London, and much better, the economy is obvious. Servants' wages also are down considerably. A head servant, who used to get \$120 to \$150 a month, now gets \$80 to \$100. Good servants are no longer rarer than diamonds.

And this brings us to the unemployed. The visitor is constantly hearing estimates of the numbers of unemployed such as ten million for the whole U.S.A., and eight hundred thousand for the city of New York. These figures must be estimates, as there is no central authority to co-ordinate and check them. The task of dealing with the unemployed has so far been left entirely to charity. Each city and each country district has organised its own voluntary workers whose business it has been to raise funds and to see to their distribution. In this way a rough estimate of the total number of unemployed can be arrived at, but it cannot be exact. As far as my own observations went unemployment was very little in evidence; but then I did not go to look for it. A visitor could stay for a month in New York and see practically no signs of it at all. What I did see on two or three occasions—and anybody who knows America will understand my amazement—was a beggar. They were not trying to sell anything: just begging! There was one old woman sitting on the steps of the subway at Times Square

and just holding out her hand. I almost wonder she was not trampled to death in the never-stopping crush, but she did not look as if she would care much if she had been. Quite a number of the crowd, never having seen a beggar before these bad times, turned round to look at her. I should not imagine that she reaped a very rich reward. Two things about this incident amazed me. First and foremost, the sight of a beggar in New York; and secondly, that she was allowed to remain there. Afterwards I saw one or two other beggars. They are, of course, the outward and visible sign of the distress with which I did not come into contact otherwise.

According to what I heard everywhere, the charity method of dealing with unemployment has reached the end of its tether, so that although the Government cannot yet make up its mind how to handle the situation, it will have to do so before long.<sup>1</sup> I was staying near Baltimore with a lady who was the head of her county organisation for dealing with the unemployed. She told me that they had only enough money to carry on until June 1, and could not raise any more. She had told the County Officials that, unless they took over on that date, the unemployed would starve, but still in the middle of May nothing had been done. In New York the city has been divided up into districts. In many shop windows you see notices, 'Join the Block-Aiders, and help the unemployed in your own block.' Each block has its own organisation, which forms part of the larger organisation. During the winter they arranged balls at the 'Waldorf,' and all the other well-known means of raising money, but now the task is beyond them. Nobody knows what is going to be done. They all realise that, if you introduce State Insurance in bad times, when it is a blessing, you cannot get rid of it in good times when it becomes an intolerable curse. But without some form of Government help, disaster will ensue.

Some members of Congress have put forward schemes for large public works, probably envisaging those works being started in their own State. But in the present condition of the national finances, these suggestions have not been received with acclamation. In short, they seem as much or more at a loss how to deal with this by-product of industrialism as everyone else. Perhaps some of the Senators may have learnt from our experience in this field. But for one nation to profit by another's experiences is so rare, and the attitude of Congress is so aloof from the rest of the world, and even

<sup>1</sup>Since this was written the Government has taken tentative action,

from reality, that it seems hardly possible that this should be the case. At present, in any case, they seem no nearer a satisfactory solution.

I have touched on some of the internal problems, problems which would be enough to daunt the stoutest hearts. But there are the external problems too. There is the Massey murder case in Honolulu with all its implications and they are so many that I cannot begin to go into them here. Then there are the big international problems that we all know about. America talks a lot about linking up reduction of debts with disarmament. There seems no doubt that a great many Americans think that two birds could be killed with one stone in this way, whereas they cannot be killed with two stones. This is very likely the case, and, if possible, would be of inestimable benefit to the world. But the Americans are so full of exhortations to the rest of the world to disarm that they are apt to forget that they themselves keep an Army and Navy out of all proportion to their needs. However, unless Europe can hold out some real disarmament as a bait, it would seem to be mere folly to propose reduction in War Debts just before the American election in November. The only result of that will be that the members of Congress will be elected with their hands tied in that particular respect, whereas, if nothing were said about it until after the elections, they would be free to vote according to common sense and the general benefit of civilisation. Indeed, they would be all the more likely to do so because they will not have to face the electors again immediately. On the other hand, waiting till November may mean the ruin of Europe. Our hopes must therefore rest on the success of the Disarmament Conference.

That is our part. What the Americans have got to do is to get back confidence, in themselves, in their administration, in their country. At present they have none of these. They hold up the President to ridicule on every possible occasion. Even people who until lately were good Republicans do so. The Democratic Party are in much the same condition. Instead of being able to take advantage of the lack of confidence in the Republican leader they lack confidence in their own leaders. There are at least three democratic presidential candidates in the field, each with a very substantial following, which can only mean disaster to the Party. The Democrats have not even sufficient trust in their own judgment to choose one of the three. The only man the American public really have confidence in and would like to see

back as President is Calvin Coolidge, the man who did nothing except get out, by the purest good fortune, at the psychological moment. They look on him as the Prosperity President. It does not matter that he was one of the least able of their Presidents. Owing to the period in which he was the Chief Executive he has become the symbol of a great head of the State. No doubt the return of Coolidge to the White House would have a great psychological effect, and as Confidence is largely psychological it might temporarily have a good effect. They would say to themselves, 'Ah, here is the man who brought prosperity: now we are in for good times again.' But that good feeling could not last long. Soon they would be bound to realise that his silence is due to the fact that he has nothing to say, and that inaction, though a Governmental virtue in prosperous times, does not help towards solving present difficulties.

The long and short of it is that America is looking for a leader, and cannot find one. In this America's problem is the same as that of most of the rest of the world. And so at last we come to the root cause of the world's trouble, and that is Democracy. Democracy as in force to-day is incapable of producing good government. It cannot produce leaders, it cannot control crime, it cannot but squander. It is, after all, government by the inefficient. How long shall we put up with it? Neither America nor the rest of the world will be able to look forward to any long period of contentment and prosperity until some drastic modification of present-day Democracy has been evolved. This may come sooner than many people think. It is to-day the great problem that confronts not only America, but the whole world.



## LITERARY ACROSTICS.

A LITERARY ACROSTIC is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prizes.

## DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 108.

'Under a spreading chestnut-tree  
The village ——— ———.'

1. 'Thou wast born of woman :  
But ——— I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,  
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born.'
2. 'If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,  
Go visit it by the pale ———.'
3. 'Oft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,  
To see the rose and woodbine twine ;  
And ——— bird sang o' its luvie,  
And, fondly, sae did I o' mine.'
4. 'Before Man's fall, the Rose was born,  
(S. Ambrose says) without the ——— :  
But, for Man's fault, then was the ———,  
Without the fragrant Rose-bud, born ;  
But ne'er the Rose without the ———.'
5. 'And in his ——— he shakes the brand  
Which none but he can wield.'
6. 'Go not, happy day,  
From the shining fields,  
Go not, happy day,  
Till the maiden ———.'

## RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page i in the preliminary pages of this issue : and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers should not write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 108 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than August 20. No answers will be opened before this date.

## ANSWER TO No. 107.

- |    |   |        |   |
|----|---|--------|---|
| 1. | F | alstaf | F |
| 2. | O | p      | E |
| 3. | O | pheli  | A |
| 4. | T | rus    | T |
| 5. | I | mperia | L |
| 6. | T | o      | Y |

PROEM : *The Tempest*, i, 2.

LIGHTS :

1. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, i, 3.
2. *Cymbeline*, ii, 3.
3. *Hamlet*, iv, 5.
4. *Timon of Athens*, i, 2.
5. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, ii, 1.
6. *Twelfth Night*, v, 1.

Acrostic No. 106 ('River Weser') proved less difficult than several of its recent predecessors, and most of the quotations were generally recognized. The prizes are won by Mr. M. Bingham Stevens, Brierley, Watlingtonbury, near Maidstone, Kent, and Mr. T. H. Lenox Conyngham, Anaverna, Ravensdale, Co. Louth, S. Ireland ; these two solvers will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

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